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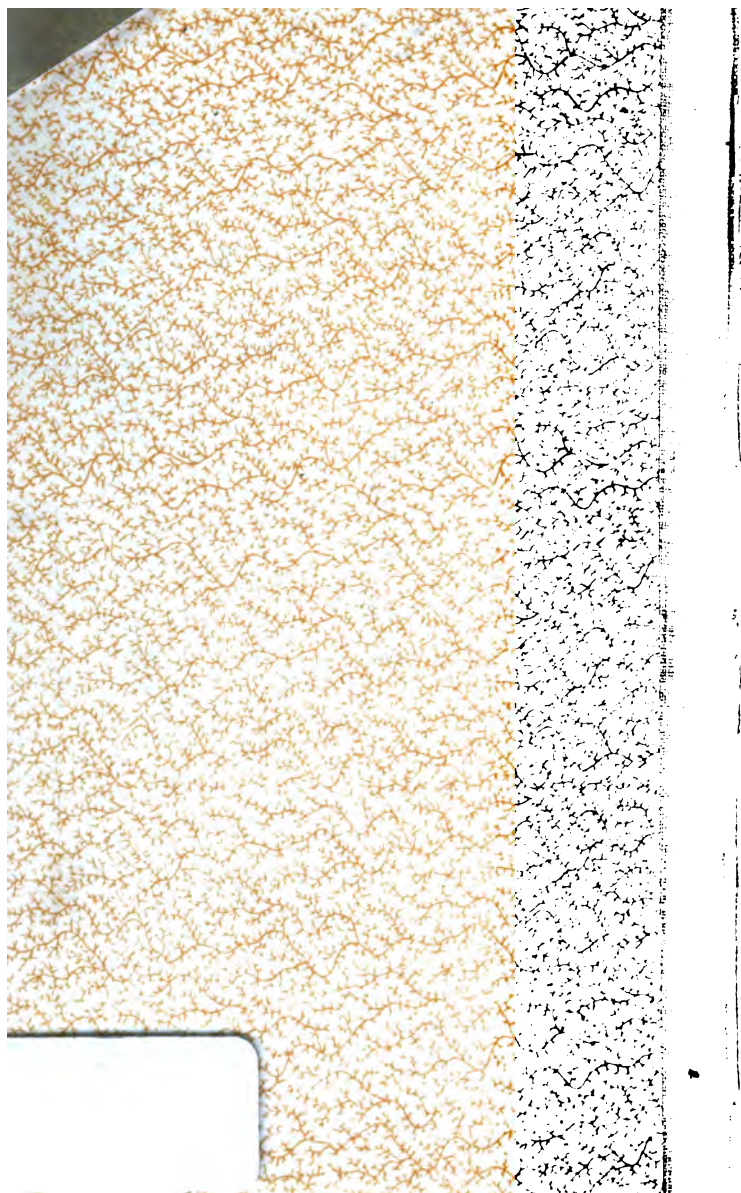
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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates. The names are: John Doe, Jane Doe, and John Doe. The dates are: 1999, 2000, and 2001. The list is as follows:

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**HALF-HOURS**

**WITH**

**FOREIGN AUTHORS.**





# HALF-HOURS

WITH

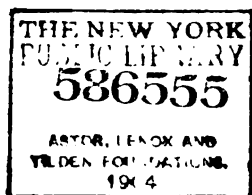
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## PREFACE.

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IN preparing this First Series of Extracts from Foreign Authors, I have, as far as advisable, given a literal translation of the original ; but there have frequently occurred instances where it has been found necessary to omit reflections which the reader would have found tedious ; and also digressions which he could not have understood without a knowledge of the circumstances referred to in them. I make no pretence of having improved upon the original ; but having abundance of material, I had no occasion to follow the author into minute details having no bearing on the narrative, but valuable to him as filling a certain number of pages. In using my discretion in the matter, I believe I have done no injustice to the author, at the same time that it has enabled me to concentrate the interest, and abridge the extracts, and thus include a greater number in this volume.

THE TRANSLATOR.



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## An Adventure in Madrid.

H. DE BALZAC.

SOME little time after his entry into Madrid, the Grand Duke of Berg invited the principal persons of the city to a *fête* given by the French army. Notwithstanding the splendour of the gala, the Spaniards present did not appear very gay; their wives danced very little, while they themselves for the most part indulged in gambling. No expense had been spared in order to give the inhabitants a high idea of the emperor—that is, if they would judge him by the proceedings of his officers. Between one and two o'clock in the morning, several French officers were lying on the grass in the vicinity of the palace, talking over the events of the war, and of the future, which did not appear very encouraging, judging from the attitude of the Spaniards present at this pompous *fête*. “My faith,” exclaimed a Frenchman, whose costume indicated that he was a surgeon in some *corps d’armée*, “yesterday I made a formal demand to Prince Murat for my recal. Without being actually afraid of leaving my bones in the Peninsula, I prefer to dress the wounds made by our good neighbours the Germans. Then, the fear of Spain is with me a kind of superstition. From my infancy I have been accustomed to hear and read of such dreadful and mysterious deeds that I am strongly prejudiced against Spanish manners. Moreover, since our entry into Madrid I have been, if not the hero, at any



rate the accomplice in some dark intrigue. I never turn a deaf ear to presentiments, wherefore to-morrow I abscond." "Since you have referred to the subject," said a colonel, abruptly, "tell us what it was." The surgeon looked keenly at each person present to assure himself that no Spaniard was within hearing before complying with the colonel's request, and having satisfied himself on this point, he proceeded to relate the following circumstance :—"I was returning quietly to my lodgings about eleven o'clock in the evening, having just left Colonel Latour, whose quarters were very near mine, when all at once, as I was turning the corner of a street, two unknown individuals threw a thick mantle over my head and shoulders, which effectually stifled my cries, although I cried like a whipped dog, and transported me with rapid dexterity to a carriage which was standing close by. As soon as the vehicle was in motion the mantle was removed from my head, and a female voice whispered in my ear, in very indifferent French :—"If you cry out, or make the slightest sign of an attempt to escape, the individual before you will thrust a poniard into your heart. Keep quiet, therefore, and I will tell you the reason of your abduction. Stretch out your hand towards me, and you will feel between us your box of instruments, which we got from your lodgings on the pretence that you had sent for them ; you will require them, as you are wanted to assist a lady who is about to be confined without her husband's knowledge ; for although he is passionately attached to her and seldom leaves her, she has been able to conceal from him the fact that she is about to become a mother, and he imagines that she is simply unwell. The dangers of attending her at this critical moment do not affect you ; only obey us, otherwise her friend who sits opposite to you, and who does not understand a word of French, will stab you on the slightest indiscretion.' 'And who are you ?' I asked, feeling for her hand. 'I am madame's maid, and we will cheerfully reward you if you will assist us

at this trying moment.' 'Willingly,' I answered, finding that I was embarked in a dangerous adventure. We continued our conversation until we arrived at the door of a garden, when the woman bound her handkerchief round my eyes and I heard a key turn gently in a lock. Holding me by the hand, the maid led me to the house, where she paused an instant to say,—'Be silent and look well after your own safety! Don't lose one of my signs, for I shall not be able to speak to you without danger for both of us, and it is at this moment a question of saving your life. The signora is in a chamber on the ground floor, and to reach it, it will be necessary to pass through her husband's bedroom and beside the bed on which he is lying, therefore step lightly, and do not make the slightest sound.' Here the lover interrupted her directions by a low growl, as if impatient at the delay. The maid was silent; I heard a door opened, and the warm air striking my face told me that I had entered a room; and creeping cautiously along without making the least noise—for it seems the maid had arranged a carpet to walk upon—I was suddenly stopped, the bandage was removed from my eyes, and I saw that I was in a large room which was very dimly lighted by a smoky lamp. The window was open, but I could see the bars of iron which the jealous husband had caused to be placed across the opening; and as I looked about me I felt very much as if I had been shot out of a sack. My attention was instantly directed to a woman lying on a rug, evidently in great suffering, but who prevented herself from uttering the slightest sound by holding a handkerchief rolled up in a ball between her teeth. Her face was covered with a veil, and I then noticed that both the man and woman who had brought me there were masked. The sufferings of the lady were fearful, and but for my assistance she must have died. Eventually, however, she was delivered of a child which was dead. On hearing from the woman that this was the case, the man with the mask shuddered

from head to foot. While he was endeavouring to judge of the condition of his mistress,—for such I presume her to have been,—the maid directed my attention to two glasses of lemonade which stood on the table, and made a sign to me not to touch them, from which I inferred that they were poisoned. I was still engaged in my professional labours, when my patient suddenly raised her hand and pointed towards the other room; of us four, she alone, notwithstanding the pain she was suffering, had heard her husband move in his bed. We were spell-bound for an instant, but so expressive were the glances which the man and woman directed towards each other, that I could read the question, ‘Shall we kill him?’ in their eyes as plainly as if they had uttered the words. I was so excited that my mouth was parched with thirst, and I stretched out my hand towards the lemonade, forgetful at the moment of the caution I had received; but the man laid his dagger, which he had just drawn, across the glasses and made a sign to me to drink from his glass. The movement was so evidently dictated by a sentiment of gratitude, that I pardoned him the atrocious design he had formed of poisoning me and thus preventing me from revealing their secret. When all was over, the maid assisted me in laying her mistress in bed. The body of the infant was enveloped in towels, and the unknown, who, it seems, had prepared for flight by packing up some jewels, thrust the parcel which contained them into my pocket. I whispered to the maid the instructions necessary to enable her to pay proper attention to her mistress, and then prepared to decamp. The maid remained beside her mistress, which disquieted me somewhat, but I kept myself on guard against a sudden attack. The unknown hid the bundle under his mantle, and made a sign to me to take hold of it, and in this way I was led through the room through which I had entered, and soon found myself in the open air. When I stepped into the garden I felt as if a weight had been removed from my breast. I kept

at a respectful distance from my guide, and closely watched his every movement. Arrived at the little door by which we had entered the garden, he took me by the hand, and pressed my lips with a signet ring which he wore on his little finger. I signed to him that I understood him. There were two horses standing in the street close by, upon which we mounted, the Spaniard taking my horse's bridle in his hand, and urging them along at a gallop. The speed at which we went prevented my taking the least notice of the objects we passed, with a view to recognising the place at any future time. At the break of day I found myself close to my own door, the Spaniard proceeding at unabated speed in the direction of the gate of Atocha." "And so you saw nothing which could enable you to identify the woman whom you had to deal with?" asked one of the officers. "Only one thing," he replied. "I remarked that she had a mole on her arm, surrounded with brown hairs." He had hardly uttered the words when he became deadly pale; the eyes of all present were fixed upon him, and they followed the direction of his glance, and then they saw that a Spaniard wrapped in a mantle was standing near. The moment he saw he was observed he disappeared among the shrubs. A French captain immediately started in pursuit. "My friends," exclaimed the surgeon, "that basilisk eye seems to have frozen me. I can hear bells ringing in my ears. Receive my adieus, you will bury me here!" "Nonsense!" answered Colonel Hulot. "Falcon has gone in pursuit of the spy, and he will give us an account of him." "Well!" exclaimed the officers on seeing the captain return out of breath from the chase. "I could not catch him. I believe he must belong to the house, and be thoroughly acquainted with all its passages, from the manner in which he disappeared in it." "I am lost," said the surgeon, in a melancholy voice. "Come, don't disturb yourself in that way," said the officers. "We will take it in turns to stay with you until you



depart." In fact, three officers who had lost all their money at the gaming-table accompanied him to his quarters, and offered to remain with him. The second day after, the surgeon received the permission he had asked for to return to France, and began his preparations for starting the following morning with a lady to whom Murat had given a strong escort. He had just finished dining with his friends, when the servant came up to say that a lady wanted to speak to him. The three officers accompanied him downstairs, fearing that it might be a snare. The woman was the servant who had assisted at the scene we have described, and she had barely time to caution him against the vengeance of her master before she fell dead : she had been poisoned. The effect of this tragical catastrophe upon the surgeon was, of course, great ; and, to drown his melancholy, he and his friends drank immoderately, after which they laid down on their beds in the same room. In the middle of the night the surgeon was awoke by the sound of the curtains of his bed being drawn back. He sat up in a state of great agitation, from the sudden manner in which he had been roused from his sleep, and saw the same Spaniard standing beside his bed whom he had observed in the garden at the conclusion of his narrative. The surgeon called out, "Help ! come to me, my friends !" At this cry of distress the Spaniard gave vent to a bitter laugh. "The opium grows for everybody," he said, and pointed towards the three friends, who were sleeping soundly : at the same moment he drew from under his mantle an arm which had been freshly severed from a body, and thrust it close to the eyes of the horrified surgeon. "Is it the same ?" he asked, pointing to the sign which the surgeon had so imprudently described. By the light of a lantern which the Spaniard had placed on the bed, the surgeon recognised the arm, and his silence was sufficient confirmation for the unknown, who, without asking another question, plunged his dagger, as he supposed, in the surgeon's heart, and

fled. Happily, the point glanced along the bone, and missed a vital part, and the surgeon eventually recovered from his wound.

Some years afterwards the surgeon was one night at a public ball with some friends who were acquainted with his history, when, while in the act of conversing with them, his jaw suddenly dropped, his eyes became fixed on some object in another part of the room, and he appeared suddenly attacked by a fit of epilepsy. His friends turned to see at whom he was staring, and beheld a tall, grave-looking Spaniard, thin as a skeleton, but whose eyes shone like fire. On his arm leaned a lady of great beauty, but who seemed to have no use of her right arm. The Frenchman turned again to ask the surgeon if these were the persons whom he had encountered in Spain, but he had disappeared. By a sudden impulse he stepped up to the lady, and asked her where she had lost her right arm. She replied, without a moment's hesitation, "In the War of Independence."

# The Headsman's Son.

BY HENRI CONSCIENCE.

THE eve preceding the Day of Pentecost, 1507, was more than usually dark in the city of Antwerp; the darkness was so great that you could imagine it palpable. There was a fine steady rain falling, too, which kept up an incessant dripping from the eaves of the houses, and which was the only sound audible in the streets, except the occasional booming of one of the church clocks. The streets were completely deserted, though it was scarcely nine o'clock, and the city seemed in a profound repose.

Anybody who happened to be on the Place des Arquebusiers at that hour on the evening in question, and whose eye could have penetrated the thick darkness, might have seen a man resting with his back against a poplar-tree which grew beside the building from which the Place derived its name. His eyes were opened widely, and fixed on the hall; his arms were crossed over his chest, and his whole attitude and appearance was that of a man buried in thought. Every now and then some unintelligible, though strongly accentuated words escaped him, accompanied by an animated gesture, followed directly afterwards by a stifled groan. His face wore a smile, but it was not the smile of joy and happiness, but the expressive contraction of the muscles of the face, which is often observed on the face of a man when he is a prey to the

deepest mental anguish, and which is, in him, the substitute for tears when in despair.

This man was, indeed, unfortunate ; for twenty years he had carried the tortures of hell in his bosom.

When, at his birth, he was first placed in his mother's arms, she placed no kiss on his forehead ; nay, she even repulsed the hands which offered the little innocent, as if the sight of it was hateful to her. His father did not rejoice at the birth of this, his first-born son ; on the contrary, he prayed to God to take him to himself. Yes, he wept over the child as if it had been the fruit of a horrible crime.

And when the child—nourished rather on his mother's tears than on the milk of her bosom—grew old enough to mingle with other children, he was abused, jeered at, and ill-treated, as if his forehead had borne an infernal stigma. Still, he was so gentle and patient, that no mark of anger escaped him, or a desire to retaliate on his persecutors ; his father alone knew the extent to which his feelings had been soured.

The child was now become a man. Notwithstanding his sufferings, his body was well-developed and tolerably robust. In spite of, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, in consequence of, the contempt with which he had all his life been treated, he had an intense longing to mix in the society of his fellow-men, and to share in their sympathy ; he thirsted for their esteem ; but the hatred and maledictions which had pursued him all his life cleaved to him still : the mere sight of him in any place where they were assembled was the signal for loading him with obloquy and abuse ; and if he did not at once depart, with the abject countenance of the vilest slave, they drove him away with blows and curses. There was no justice for him on earth ; and his only resource was in prayers to the Supreme Being for consolation and strength under his heavy afflictions.

Such had been the life of the man who leant against the poplar-tree, his heart torn by the most pain-

ful emotions, and his soul a prey to the deepest despair.

Nevertheless his heart was sensitive and loving, his understanding was remarkably good; and his countenance, which was manly and intelligent, harmonized with it. His voice was soft and grave. . . . All of a sudden he threw up his arms, and exclaimed aloud, "O, my God, my God, if by thy holy will thou hast formed me to suffer, give me strength to support the burden which overwhelms me. My forehead burns! my head is on fire! Lord, Lord, save me from despair! Root in me the consoling conviction that thou art good—that thou art just—for a fearful doubt has entered my soul!"

Gradually his voice sunk and died away in an unintelligible murmur; and, suddenly darting forward, he proceeded at a rapid pace along the Rue des Arquebusiers as far as the Trois Bornes, and thence to the Rue de la Garde. Once there, his pace slackened, and it was easy to observe that he was under the control of some dominant idea, for every now and again he would stand quite still, evidently unconscious that he was doing so. All at once he shook off the thoughtfulness which oppressed him, and, with a deep sigh, he continued his course along the street, stopping an instant at every house where he could distinguish a light, and, after listening a moment, continued his course, for he had heard the voices of men, and that was enough to cause him to move on precipitately. In this way he walked as far as the Rue St. Jean, and on arriving opposite a public-house he stopped, and not hearing the sound of voices, he muttered, "I am dying of thirst—there is nobody here—I may drink!"

He lifted the latch and entered. Poor fellow! he thought there was nobody there, because he could hear no voices; but how greatly was he surprised when he found himself in the presence of a room-full of people, whose attention was earnestly directed towards a man

who was in the act of performing some conjuring trick for their amusement.

The thirsty stranger trembled at finding himself in such a situation, and stepped back as if to quit the house; but seeing that all eyes were now turned towards him, and fearing to be pursued, he stepped forward to the counter, and asked the landlady for a pint of beer. She regarded him suspiciously, and tried to get a clearer view of his face under his broad-brimmed hat; but the stranger observing this, bent his head still lower to escape her curious glances.

While the landlady was going down into the cellar to get the beer required, the looks of the assembled drinkers were bent upon him, and a whisper passed from one to the other. One of them especially seemed greatly irritated, and his violent gestures showed plainly enough that he had a great desire to maltreat some person; the stranger turned his back and waited the return of the landlady in fear and trembling. The woman hurried herself rather more than was customary with her, and placed the beer before the customer who had so strongly excited her curiosity.

The young man drank off half the liquid with avidity, and placed the remainder on the counter, and had just handed a coin to pay for it, when a man sprang forward, seized the jug, and dashed the contents into his face.

"Cursed son of the headsman," cried he, "how didst thou dare to drink in our presence? Were it not for soiling my hands by touching such a slip of the gallows, I would break every bone in thy body!"

The unfortunate individual thus brutally apostrophized, was, in truth, the son of the headsman, the child of the executioner of the *hautes œuvres* of Antwerp; he was named Gerard, and had scarcely passed his twentieth birthday. The hatred and contempt which everywhere pursued him will account for his fears in the presence of his fellow-men. That which

happened to him now always befel the executioner when he dared to mingle with other citizens.

The unfortunate Gerard bent his head resignedly, and looked at the beer trickling down his clothes without addressing a single reproach to his brutal assailant, who, however, did not cease to abuse him, and ended by saying to the landlady,—

“Woman, our society will leave here to-morrow, and take up its quarters at the ‘Saint Sebastian;’ we will spend no more money here. Perhaps to-morrow you will make us drink from the headsman’s jug.”

“Hold! there is an end of the jug!” cried the landlady, dashing it on the ground, and breaking it in a thousand pieces. “Is it my fault that this son of the gibbet has set his foot into a respectable house?” And turning towards Gerard, she said, “Be off! get out of my house, torturer of men!”

Up to this time the young man had borne the invectives heaped upon him without attempting to reply; but there is a limit to human endurance, and this latter reproach roused the latent pride of his manly nature, and instead of retreating before the cries and abuse that were showered upon him, he drew himself up, and replied calmly:—

“Woman, I go. Although the son of a headsman, I should have more pity for my neighbour than you have. My father tortures the guilty because men and the law compel him to do so, but you torture me without compulsion, and without my having done you any harm. Reflect, that in treating me like a dog you sin against God.”

The young man’s voice was so gentle and touching that the woman was astonished: she could not comprehend how a man could rest so calm after being so harshly treated. A tear shone in her eye, and taking up the piece of money that Gerard had laid down, she threw it towards him, and said in a gentler voice,

“I will have none of your money; take it, and be gone in peace.”

The piece of money fell on the ground, and was picked up by the man who had thrown the beer in his face ; he looked at it an instant, and then threw it with horror on a table.

" See, see ! there is blood upon it ! " he exclaimed. " Human blood ! "

Those present crowded round the table and regarded the piece of money as if it were itself the corpse of the individual whose blood they thought it had upon it. A general cry of horror and indignation against Gerard was raised by them.

The young man knew how little foundation there was for the assertion, for he had taken it that very evening from the person who let the chairs in the church. This last charge was too much to bear, he lost his calmness, and springing forward to the table he addressed his persecutors in bitter language.

" Rascals that you are, how dare you speak of blood ? Don't you see that this piece, like all the others, is of bad alloy, and has therefore a reddish tint ? But no, passion renders you blind. You say I am the son of the executioner ; it is true. God has so willed it, but you are more to be despised than I, and I am proud that neither in name nor conduct do I resemble such perverted creatures as you have shown yourselves to be ! "

He had scarcely uttered these words ere he was assailed from all quarters with blows and curses ; he defended himself bravely, but was overpowered by numbers, and eventually found himself in the street, covered with bruises ; he readjusted his cloak, and walked away in the same manner he had come ; the recollection of his quarrel had already faded from his memory : his imagination presented a far more terrible picture to his mind.

During this time there was in a certain house a young girl whose heart beat strongly with anxiety on account of Gerard, as if she had a presentiment that some evil was about to happen to him. Out of his



family, this girl was the only human being who sympathized with him, and whose love was the greater that she knew him to be hated and despised by all the world beside. Her love had resisted the reprimands of her mother, the reproaches of her neighbours, and, what was more difficult to bear, the raillery of girls of her own age. She rejoiced in their insults, for it proved to her how deep and strong was her attachment to the most unfortunate of men: and that it could not but be pleasing to the Almighty that she should give the only treasure she possessed—a pure and innocent love, to one whom it pleased Him to place in so miserable a position.

Apollonia, or rather Lina, as she was usually called, lived in a narrow and poor street, along with her mother and her brother Franz, a hard-working fellow during five days of the week, spending half of the Sunday in church, and the remainder in the beer-house, from whence he usually returned with marks of having been engaged in a pugilistic encounter. Notwithstanding this, he was a good son, and the Saturday never passed without his bringing the greater part of his earnings to his widowed mother.

While Gerard was hastening towards their house, Lina and her mother were seated opposite each other by the fireside, busily engaged in lace-making. At the other end of the room was the work-bench and tools of a cabinet-maker, and Franz hard at work on a piece of furniture of some sort. As to the room itself, it was beautifully clean, the floor was strewn with white sand, and the walls decorated with a crucifix and a few pictures of saints, but the room contained nothing costly or superfluous, for the whole family earned very little more than sufficient for their daily subsistence.

Gerard was in the constant habit of visiting them at eight o'clock every evening, but it was now ten, and he had not appeared. The poor girl did not know what to think, and was so low-spirited and absent that

the questions addressed to her by her mother passed unheeded.

"Why, whatever is the matter with you, child? If he does not come to-night he will come to-morrow; there is no lack of days in the year."

"Yes, mother; what you say is true; but it is so late that I am afraid something has happened to him. . . . People have such a spite against him."

"No doubt they have, my child; but he is the headsman's son, and that kind of people have always been detested. Thus they killed the executioner Harmen, and drowned Hans, another headsman, at the foot of the tower of Kroonenberg."

"And what had they done, mother?"

"I don't know—nothing, I believe; but it was because headsmen put so many innocent persons to death."

"But, mother, the executioner only does what the judge orders him to do; why not rather drown the judge?"

"Oh, well, Lina, it always has been thus. There is an old saying which runs—'In a nest where there are several puppies, the weakest is always most bitten, and gets the least to eat.'"

"A very bad saying it is, mother."

The conversation lasted for some time longer, until the mother grew too sleepy to continue it, and asked Lina to put away her work and go to bed; but Lina did not feel at all disposed to go; she had not given up the hope of seeing Gerard, so she pleaded her desire to finish the piece of lace on which she was engaged.

"Very well, my dear child; but make haste, for I can hardly keep my eyes open."

"I am not going to bed yet," Franz called out from his end of the room. "I must finish this work I am about for the landlady of the *Colt*; she will send for it to-morrow morning."

"Young man! young man!" said his mother, with a smile in which a slight shade of reproach was visible,

"I am afraid you drank rather more beer there than you were able to pay for, and now you are working it out. . . . I am going to bed. Good-night; and don't forget to say your prayers before you go to bed."

She had hardly gone to bed in the little room adjoining, when Gerard knocked at the door, and was admitted by Franz.

He was very pale, and his countenance bore the impress of a more profound melancholy than usual, although Lina was too much accustomed to this to remark it. He advanced slowly to the girl, took her hand and pressed it against his heart without speaking. This was his habitual way of meeting her; he rarely had recourse to words; but there was that in his eyes which told her how profoundly grateful he was to her, and how deep his affection.

"Gerard," said Lina, "what is the matter with you? Your hand is as cold as ice, and, great heaven! there is blood on your neck."

"It is nothing, Lina; I hurt myself by accident in the dark. How happy I should be if I only had bodily suffering to bear!"

These words were accompanied by a deep sigh, and were uttered in such a tone as to alarm Lina very much. The sombre and penetrating look with which he regarded her, made her apprehensive that he had something fearful to tell her. She took his hand and pressed it, as though to give him courage. . . . He gazed at her long and earnestly, and then leading her to a chair, he seated himself by her side and said—

"My friend, listen to me attentively, I beseech you, for I have much to say; and to-day you hear my voice for the last time."

Without noticing the paleness of the trembling Lina, he continued, after a pause—

"As children we played together; something, we know not what, drew us more closely together as we grew older, and our friendship became converted into an ardent and irresistible love. You knew not then,

angel that you are, what it was to be the first-born of a headsman; you knew not that he who beheads, breaks on the wheel, and marks with a red-hot iron, is loaded with greater ignominy than he who is beheaded, broken on the wheel, or marked with a red-hot iron by him. Later you learnt something of this, but your pure and innocent spirit revolted against the injustice of men; and the more clearly my wretched position became revealed to you, the greater became the intensity of your affection; you saw that without your love I should die. Oh, yes! without your love, Lina, I must have died long since, from the intolerable anguish that has wrung my soul, for I have nothing to sustain me but the belief in God, and that he has reserved a happier life for me in another world, and your love. Men persecute me as though I had the mark of Cain upon my brow; the blood you have seen trickling down my neck was shed by their hatred; but that would be nothing, my beloved; oh no, not if my body lay bruised and inanimate in the street would I complain; but this is where I suffer—this is the seat of the torture!”

He placed his finger on his forehead, and proceeded thus—

“To know that with the most irreproachable life—with the most affectionate and devoted heart, I am condemned to be despised, ill-treated, and detested by everybody—even by the most degraded wretches! angel of kindness, do you comprehend that that is more than I am able to bear, and that it is breaking my heart?”

“I have long seen that,” answered Lina, sobbing. “Have not your sufferings an echo in my heart?”

Gerard was silent for an instant while she was speaking, but when she had finished, he continued in the same tone as before—

“We indulged ourselves with the hope that some unexpected event would release me from the necessity of becoming an executioner, and that then, tranquil

and unknown, we might inhabit some other town; but, alas! dear Lina, that was a vain dream; the fatal hour has arrived. To-morrow—yes, to-morrow, you will see your unfortunate lover on the scaffold, the murderous sword in his hand! Know you now the reason that that hand is as cold as ice?"

He placed his hands in hers, and continued:—

"My father is in bed ill, and the judge has ordered me to execute Herman the fisherman."

While Gerard had been addressing her, the young girl had gradually acquired more and more firmness; and when he had concluded, she looked at him, and said firmly—

"What is it you wish?"

"I wish you to forget me, and to leave me to bear alone the suffering and contempt which await me in the future. Oh! Lina, give me this consolation."

"Is my love a burden to you, Gerard? Does it add another to the torments you endure?"

"No, dearest; your love is the sole earthly blessing which God has accorded me. For the love of me you have passed your youth a prey to the insults of mankind—to you I owe the only happy hours of my life that I have known. You have sacrificed yourself; you have been a martyr for me. The sentiment which attaches me to you has hitherto blinded me; but consider, dear Lina, to-morrow I shall be not merely the son of the headsman, but the headsman himself. And do you believe, can you for a moment imagine that I can ask such a sacrifice of you? Can you believe me so degraded as to dare to touch you—you, the very type of innocence and purity—with hands which had been bathed in human blood. You, dearest, who know me, tell me that you do not think me capable of doing this thing."

The girl listened to him, her colour heightening and her eyes brightening under the influence of the generous sentiment which stirred within her.

"Believe me, my friend, I understand perfectly the motive which induces you to speak thus. I know your generous and noble nature; but have I not a right to exhibit equal generosity? I am yours, Gerard, as long as life lasts. Nothing can change my feelings; and in spite of contempt and scorn I will be your wife."

"Never! never! Lina, shall you be the wife of a headsman. If I were capable of such baseness I should merit everlasting reprobation. To draw you down into the abyss of shame and contempt that awaits me—Oh, never!"

"Gerard, I will never leave you. If it be a sacrifice I am making, it is one of which I am proud."

A gleam of happiness passed over the young man's face. It was so sweet to be assured that he possessed the love of one human being. . . . .

While this dialogue was going on between the two lovers, Franz had continued his work without paying much attention to them; but as soon as he had finished he was too sleepy to indulge them any longer, so taking up the lamp, he said—

"Come, come, Lina, I am very sleepy and want to go to bed. You can tell Gerard to come a little earlier to-morrow."

Gerard had, of course, much more to say, but he took up his hat, and as he was going out he said to Franz, "To-morrow I have to decapitate a man on the scaffold."

"Be careful how you do it, then!" replied Franz, with indifference; "for if you fail to do it properly, you will be killed like the headsman Harmen; but in that case I shall be there to assist you."

The youthful executioner looked at Lina with profound melancholy, and wiping a tear from his eye, he held out his hand to her, but the generous girl threw her arms round his neck, and said hastily and emphatically—

"I will be at the foot of the scaffold. Look at me well!"

The next instant she was listening with a throbbing heart and tears in her eyes to his retreating footsteps.

## II.

When Franz cut short their conversation, Gerard had not repeated his eternal adieu to Lina, because he desired to spare her further suffering; nevertheless he intended that adieu to be a final one, for he had adopted the firm and irrevocable decision never to associate this pure and innocent being with his wretched lot.

He traversed hastily the streets which separated him from his abode near the Rampart, and on arriving there he knocked at a door which was painted of a blood colour, to indicate the residence of the executioner. As soon as the servant opened the door, Gerard asked—

“Well, Jean, has the judge been here?”

“Yes, he has just gone. Your father told me to tell you that he wanted to see you.”

Gerard went upstairs to the room where his sick father lay.

The old headsman was pale and thin; it was easy to see that intense suffering must have hollowed his cheeks and sunk his glassy eyes in their orbits.

Notwithstanding that maladies of long duration reduce the body almost to the condition of a skeleton, the mind is left intact, and even seems to acquire greater vigour. It was so in the case of the old headsman, whose understanding was as clear as ever, notwithstanding the great sufferings he endured. When his son entered the room he made no remark, but his eyes followed his movements with anxiety.

Gerard placed a chair by his father's bedside, and slipping his hand under the bedclothes, he took his hand, and pressed it, and said, in a trembling voice—

“Father! father! the judge has been here. Tell me, what is my doom? Shall I be an executioner?”

"My son," replied the father, sorrowfully, "I have exhausted every argument on the judge; he will not allow our assistant to take your place. Neither gold nor prayers have any weight with him; therefore, my unhappy son, you must be the headsman."

The young man had foreseen this, but still the positive announcement gave him a severe shock. He pressed the hand of his father with convulsive force; but in a short time he presented only his usual appearance of melancholy, as he said—

"It is to-morrow, then, my father—to-morrow, that my last hope of happiness vanishes. To-morrow I shall be stained with the blood of a victim. . . . My wretched career is about to commence. . . . Murderer—paid murderer!"

"My child," said the old man, "prepare yourself for a life of martyrdom and suffering; each head you strike off will weigh upon your heart like a rock, and when this weight reaches a certain point, you will die, as I am about to do. . . . But there is, above, a Judge who will reward us in proportion to the trials we have undergone here below."

Gerard seized the afflicting part of his father's words without listening to the consoling part.

"Oh! I understand now why the bourgeois hate me. May I not be called upon any day to put one of them to death, whether he be guilty or innocent? Yet, if they knew what is passing in my heart they would not hate me. They think that the headsman feels a pleasure in shedding blood; and yet, if the sight of the bared neck of the victim makes the executioner falter in his stroke, they stone him to death, because he is not devoid of feeling, and pity has weakened his hands."

"I have often thought of that contradiction, my son, but I could never understand it."

"I have understood it, my father, a long time. In every assemblage of men a victim is required, upon whom can be bestowed all the cruelty and hatred



hidden at the bottom of their hearts. . . . . But, father, is there no way of evading my fate? I cannot familiarize myself with the idea of taking the lives of my fellow-creatures; it seems to me that to-morrow I shall become a vile and contemptible being; I shall despise myself. And there is no hope! It must be!"

"My son," said the old man, looking towards a book which lay open upon a table, "take the book which the judge showed me, and read therein your sentence."

Gerard read it attentively, and then dashed it to the ground with indignation, and exclaimed—

"Cursed be the unjust law which condemned me from my birth to succeed to the shedding of blood, and to be covered with opprobrium. . . . . Do you think, father, that I was sent into the world without a heart, and that to be thus buried under the load of public ignominy is nothing?"

"Despair leads you too far, Gerard," said his father, with a sigh. "I understand your sadness; but remember that the executioner is absolutely necessary to society, and submit yourself to the condition in which it has pleased God to place you; perhaps, bitter as your life may be, you may meet with hours of calm and repose."

"Have you ever met with them, father? Is it such hours that are leading you to the grave? Were those tears of joy which I have seen you shed? Do not seek to conceal from me the horrors of my destiny. You have had strength to support yours a long time; but I do not feel myself equally strong. . . . . If death strikes us both at the same time to-morrow, our souls, for ever free and happy, might meet again before the tribunal of God."

"This long discussion has fatigued my chest; I will give you only one more piece of advice. When you ascend the scaffold, do not look at the people; if you do, all those eyes which gleam with savage curiosity will disconcert you, and you will tremble. Try to imagine yourself alone on the scaffold with the con-

damned, and measure your blow well. If you don't kill the victim at the first blow, a thousand voices will be raised against you, and, perhaps, I may never again see you alive. I will pray to God in his mercy to give you strength to accomplish the fatal task. . . . Go, my son, and may my blessing rest upon you !

Gerard was about to continue his complaints, but he checked himself out of love for his father ; he embraced him tenderly as if he were about to separate from him for ever, and exclaimed, with deep emotion—

“Sleep in peace, my good and kind father, sleep in peace !”

He entered his room, and the morning sun saw him still sitting beside the table, his hand resting on the handle of the glaive.

### III.

The following day was one of those beautiful days of early spring ; the sun shed his beneficent rays from the depths of a pure and transparent sky, in the azure of which was scattered here and there a few loose fragments of cloud. The influence of the fine weather had a powerful effect on the temper of the inhabitants of Antwerp. The streets were filled with people in their holiday costume ; the children ran and played in the streets, and a crowd of winged insects, to which nature had just given birth, filled the air.

At ten o'clock the whole population was assembled in the neighbourhood of the church Notre-Dame, to see the procession of the Fête Dieu leave it, the spectators regarding, with uncovered head, the defiling of the rich banners and flags which preceded the host, and as soon as this reached them, handkerchiefs were spread on the stones and they knelt in respectful silence. . . . . Following the procession closely were the members of the different guilds, clothed in elegant costumes and bearing their respective arms, which glittered in the sun. Shortly after the passage of

the guilds there was a general excitement in the crowd, which manifested itself by attempts on the part of each individual to elevate himself above his neighbours by climbing on window-sills, or on anything else which would answer the purpose, and by clapping of hands, accompanied by cries of—" *The ommegang!*—there is the *ommegang!*" and in truth a monstrous fish, swimming in the midst of painted waves, slowly emerged upon the great market-place. On the back of the marine monster was seated a Cupid, the little god of love, who by a sign of his powerful hand directed the two jets of water which issued from the nostrils of the fish upon the sightseers. It was amusing to see the good citizens trying to get beyond reach of their monster enemy, the compact crowd entirely cutting off their escape, while the alarm they manifested only drew upon them additional torrents of water. It must not be supposed that they were much grieved at the damage done to their clothes; the pleasure they derived from the traditional amusement prevented them from giving a thought to that.

After the whale came the giant Omon Antigone, who turned his head from side to side, rolled his eyes in a frightful manner, and peeped into the garret windows of the highest houses. Next came the dolphins, Neptune's chariot, Europa on the bull, Parnassus with the Muses, the Virgin's chair, Fortune seated on an elephant, the vessel of commerce, and a number of other more or less beautiful emblematical figures.

As each fresh object passed, the citizens were loud in their acclamations, now in honour of the beauty of the group itself, anon because the group was composed of friends or relatives. Under the influence of the beautiful weather all hearts were disposed to gaiety. Nevertheless, while the thoughtless multitude were indulging in these childish pleasures, with as much zest as if pain and wretchedness were unknown to them, there was a man who sat beside his father's sick

bed who had drunk the cup of bitterness to its dregs. This man was Gerard. No longer with the black hair of the day before, but with hair as white and a face as wrinkled as his father's. The agony he had endured during the previous night had not only produced this effect, but had apparently destroyed the elasticity of his muscles, and rendered his nerves so irritable that the slightest noise made him tremble from head to foot, and every time that the clock in the tower of St. Jacques announced that another hour had passed, great drops of sweat rolled down his face.

Two hours after mid-day sounded, and the same agitation seized him for the sixth or seventh time.

"Have courage, my poor boy," said the father; "let me share your troubles with you; you may, perhaps, derive consolation from my words. You have sat there so long without speaking."

Gerard took his father's hand and pressed it to his heart, and replied in a low and broken voice:

"Father, I ponder on the distance which separates me from eternal infamy. Four hours more and I shall be looked upon as a being accursed. I shall have dipped my hands in the blood of my neighbour. The road of life will be irrevocably closed behind me; there will no longer be a *possibility* of my drawing back; I must go forward without looking right or left, in the way of opprobrium and ignominy; and if a compassionate being—O Lina! Lina!—offers me her hand, my hand which responds to its pressure will be one stained with human blood. Father, I hardly dare tell you, but many times during the past night I took a knife in my hand to terminate my sufferings, but it seemed as if you held me back. I thought of the pain my death would cause you, and the knife fell from my hands."

While the son was speaking thus, a deadly paleness spread over the face of the old headsman, and it was not difficult to see that a sinister presentiment had taken possession of his mind.

"My son," he cried, in a supplicating voice, "my dear son, look at me and imagine the pain your words give me. Know you not that your words announce your certain death? Know you not that they are as if you said, 'This evening my body will be torn in pieces by a furious multitude, and you, my father, you will seek in vain for my scattered limbs, for my dismembered corpse will be trodden under the feet of the people.'"

"I know it," replied his son with calmness.

With a painful effort the old man raised himself in his bed, and passed his arms round his son's neck, and with the tears trickling down his aged face he said—

"Oh, Gerard! I understand you now; you desire this death! To give yourself up a voluntary victim to the rage of the multitude . . . . while I, old and sick, will be left alone in the world. You cannot have thought of the cruel ingratitude of your project, Gerard."

These words produced a surprising effect on him to whom they were addressed; he trembled like a criminal taken in the commission of a heinous offence. For the first time he recognised the ingratitude of which he would be guilty if he carried his project into execution. He was horrified.

"Father," said he, "pardon me; I see now my duty. . . . Yes, it is necessary that I should live! Well, I will mount the scaffold courageously. . . . I defy the opprobrium, ignominy, and hatred that will fall upon me. I no longer fear, and shall dip my hands in the blood of my brethren without horror. They have willed it. . . . Don't weep, father; your son will be an executioner, and with an executioner's heart."

To have seen Gerard when he spoke thus, one would have thought him suddenly transformed, and that he no longer felt any repugnance to shedding blood, or that he had suddenly acquired an energy which gave him moral courage to surmount that repugnance. But this was a simple burst of feeling, calculated to deceive both himself and his father: at

heart he was the same, as was shown the instant after, for when the dreadful alternative between shedding blood out of consideration for his father, or preferring death for himself to end his sufferings, returned to his mind, he was seized with a more violent fit of trembling than any which he had previously undergone ; and while beseeching his father not to weep, the tears poured down his own cheeks. Each tried to comfort the other, but in vain ; the poor old father dreaded the consequences of his son's want of firmness, while the son dreaded to think of what the remainder of his life would be if he once performed an execution.

#### IV.

The time fixed for the execution of the fisherman Herman was seven o'clock in the evening ; the execution had been delayed till that hour in consequence of the popular rejoicings held on that day. Long before this hour arrived numerous groups might have been seen moving in the direction of the place of execution, in order to be present at the bloody drama. Nothing seems to attract popular curiosity like the prospect of seeing a head with distorted features roll on the scaffold, while torrents of blood steep the soil beneath with a steaming redness.

The news of the imminent decapitation had long before made many tremble with joy : they will go to see. Arrived there they are painfully affected ; they pity the condemned. Why ? To hide from themselves and others their degraded nature, for they are conscious of the cruelty which is hidden under their infamous curiosity.

The field where the execution was to take place was literally covered with people ; women of every condition and every age were there, with their sons and daughters ; and the decrepit old man, whom no other inducement would have drawn from the fireside, used the last remains of his strength in dragging his

stiffened limbs to the foot of the scaffold that he might once more witness the bloody spectacle of an execution. It was a saddening sight to gaze on this huge crowd of people, to see them laughing and jesting to while away the time, while above their heads were naked skeletons and half-decomposed bodies suspended on gibbets, with the wheel, and other horrid implements of torture displayed on the scaffold.

In the midst of the crowd, and quite close to the scaffold, stood Lina, with a fast-beating heart in her oppressed bosom, and scarcely able to refrain from weeping, notwithstanding the presence of the people about her; but the thought that she had come there to give courage to her lover, and not to weaken him still further by a display of her own weakness, supported her. Her brother Franz was beside her, dressed very much like other citizens, with a broad-brimmed hat on his head, and a great brown mantle thrown over his shoulders. Lina had told him of Gerard's state of mind, and the young cabinet-maker, inspired by that somewhat rough generosity which formed part of his character, was prepared to assist Gerard in the event of an assault being made upon him. As it was already late, and dusk was stealing on, the headsman's assistants busied themselves actively in preparing everything on the scaffold. They had not long to wait, for the fatal vehicle was seen making its way through the crowd, in the midst of a general murmur of expectation among those who had not yet been able to obtain a glimpse of it. Herman the condemned, clothed in a dress of black linen, was seated at the back of the vehicle, with a priest by his side. Gerard, armed with the long glaive of justice, stood in front, having an assistant by his side.

Nobody could judge of what was passing in his mind, for his face was perfectly impassible, and his eyes cast downwards, never once turned towards the people. But for the sword on which he leaned, it would have been difficult to decide from appearances

whether he was the executioner or the condemned. To avoid attracting the attention of the crowd to his altered appearance, his father had taken the precaution of having his whitened hair cut closely to his head. He ascended the scaffold without being conscious of what he was doing, and was partly insensible as to what he was about to do, and of the nature of the objects which surrounded him; and all the attempts of Franz to attract his attention to the presence of Lina were unsuccessful.

The executioner's assistants desired to get the condemned from the vehicle to the scaffold, but he objected that he had not completed his confession, and that he wished to entirely purify his conscience, since there was no further hope for him in this world. Possibly he had some hope of escape, grounded on the increasing obscurity, for even then the people at some distance from the scaffold were unable to distinguish anything more of it than a dark mass. Fearing that they would be deprived of the agreeable spectacle, the crowd began to murmur aloud at the delay. The condemned was then dragged on the scaffold and forced on his knees at the front of it. An assistant bared the criminal's neck and gave a significant look at his master, accompanied by a slight gesture, indicating the spot where he was to strike.

The sight of the naked flesh awoke Gerard from the state of insensibility into which he had fallen, his legs trembled, his hands shook, and the sword fell from his nerveless hand upon the scaffold. An assistant picked it up hastily and thrust it into his hand, which grasped the handle convulsively.

The man with the red wand, or the officer of high justice, gave the signal, but Gerard neither heard his voice nor saw the descent of his wand.

"Quick, master, quick!" urged one of his assistants, for already a sinister murmur was heard among the mob.

Gerard made a last effort to collect himself, and



raised the sword in the air with the sincere intention of striking. Without hardly knowing where he was, or what he was doing or thinking of, overcome with shame and terror, a sort of rage took possession of his mind, and he raised the glaive, and was about to strike a blow as deadly as ever had been struck on a scaffold. But at that instant the victim turned his head, and at the sight of the uplifted sword raised a lamentable cry. This cry pierced Gerard's heart, and he suffered the sword to sink down. It so happened that the edge of the weapon touched the neck of the condemned man; and though it had not wounded him in the least, the cold contact of the steel induced him to imagine that he was grievously wounded; and he suddenly sprang to his feet, and, with outstretched arms, implored the people to succour him, for they were wilfully mangling him.

Nothing more was needed to excite the fury of the mob; pity gave a tint of generosity to the violence they were about to commit.

"To death! put the torturer of men to death!"

Such were the cries which now arose from all sides, and stones began to fly about the scaffold. Gerard was at first alarmed; but recovering himself, he advanced to the front of the scaffold, and folding his arms he cried in a loud voice—

"Here I am! kill me, bloodthirsty people!"

These words raised the wrath of the people to its highest pitch; women and children, together with the more decent portion of the men, fled in all directions away from the scaffold, leaving it surrounded by only the dregs of the populace, who made a rush at the scaffold with the view of seizing the headsman in spite of the opposition offered by the officers of justice. On they came, yelling and roaring like so many demons; but at the moment they had almost overcome the resistance of the officers, an individual who had climbed upon the scaffold approached Gerard and whispered in his ear—

"Gerard, Lina begs you, for the sake of the love she

bears you, to come and speak to her once more ; she is there, below—follow me."

Gerard followed him, and in an instant he was beside her. The individual who had summoned him from the scaffold was, of course, Franz, who then threw his mantle over Gerard and pressed his hat on his head. "Walk quietly through the crowd," he whispered, "and wait for me among the trees behind the second gallows."

Seeing that he made no opposition, Franz rushed off in the opposite direction, and raised such an uproar that the men about the scaffold thought he must have caught the headsman, and a general rush was made in the direction of the noise, thus leaving the road open for Gerard and Lina to make their escape.

The people soon stormed the scaffold and set the condemned at liberty, and then began to ill-treat the officials to make them state where the headsman was hidden.

At this moment the thought flashed across a man's mind that the man whom he had seen covered by another with a mantle must have been the executioner. Having observed the direction in which he and Lina went, and thinking only of gratifying his rage, he rushed off in pursuit and caught sight of them as they were about to disappear behind a thicket. With an oath he sprang upon Gerard and tore the mantle from his shoulders, when the dress of the executioner became visible. He raised the bludgeon he held in his hand, and brought it down with such force on Gerard's head that he fell to the ground insensible. The savage would have continued his brutality, but Lina, who had by this time recovered from the stupor the suddenness of the assault had occasioned, sprang forward and caught him round the waist and held him with such strength that he was unable to advance. Love and rage at the brutal manner in which her lover had been treated gave her almost superhuman strength. The ruffian struggled to force himself out of her arms, but in vain.

Fortunately, the noise made by the crowd about the scaffold prevented his oaths and curses from being heard. At last Lina could resist no longer, she was exhausted, and was just about to resign her hold, when Franz came up. He at once saw the state of affairs, seized the would-be murderer by the shoulders with his powerful hands and threw him heavily to the ground, then seizing him by the legs he commenced dragging him towards the scaffold, first telling Lina to hide Gerard's body in the copse in case he might not be dead. As he dragged the fellow into the crowd which surrounded the scaffold he shouted, "Victory! victory! here is the headsman!"

A savage roar was raised by the multitude, who rushed eagerly forward to assist in the bloody work of sacrificing, as they supposed, the man whose misfortune it was to be entrusted with carrying out the last dread sentence of the law. Then ensued a confused striking of blows with heavy sticks, stones, and iron-shod boots, until there remained of the man who himself sought to commit murder, nothing but a flattened mass of human flesh.

Franz left the crowd to complete their ignoble vengeance, and hastened back to Lina, whom he found kneeling beside the still insensible body of Gerard, and praying fervently. By pressing his hand over Gerard's heart he found that he still lived, and running off to a rivulet close by he got some water, with which he bathed his face until he gave signs of revival.

As soon as Gerard had recovered sufficient strength, they all three moved off, and by dint of great precautions succeeded in entering the town unobserved, and Gerard remained concealed in the home of his betrothed until midnight, when he and Franz abruptly entered his father's house.

The poor old man, who was weeping bitterly at the supposed death of his son, could not, at first, believe his eyes, but thought he must be the victim of a delusion; but the caresses of his son speedily convinced him on

that point, and then the calm and happy expression of the old man's face was a pleasure to see. For a time he remained without speaking ; at last he seemed to wake up, and, in affecting terms, reminded his son that now he was believed to be dead, the curse which had rested on their race was broken. "Go," said he ; "quit Antwerp, and marry Lina, and love her well. Your sons will not be executioners from their birth, and you will not weep over them as I have wept over thee. The treasure amassed by our forefathers is sufficient to preserve you always from want ; employ it well, and live happy." . . . . .

His voice became broken, and died away. His son pressed his head to his breast, and the intense happiness he had felt in the thought that he had not sullied his hands with the blood of a fellow-creature was saddened by the thought of leaving his aged father.

Long after the events we have recorded, Gerard, the headsman's son, resided, under another name and in the society of his affectionate wife, in Brussels. And when age had overtaken him, and death laid his hand upon him, his bed was surrounded by a numerous offspring, who had never had cause to tremble at the thought that, by the laws of their country, they could be called upon to shed the blood of their fellow-creatures.

## A Bal Costume.

BY P. DE K.

A FEW days previous to Christmas I received the following note :—

“ You are invited to come and pass the evening of Thursday at M. ——’s ; there will be a piano and two violins for those who like to play them ; one will be received whether masked or not ; disguise is not compulsory ; and one will indulge in a crowd of diversions and others. The evening will terminate with two meat pies ; and those persons who have not arrived at ten o’clock will not have any supper.”

The singularity of the invitation, and especially the name of the person who sent it, decided me on accepting it at once. The writer of the invitation was a somewhat elderly bachelor who had accumulated a considerable fortune in trade. He made pretensions to being looked upon as a funny fellow, but his practical jokes were not always in good taste ; and it was the knowledge of this fact which made me accept the invitation so readily, for I felt sure the evening would not pass without an exhibition of his peculiar talent. The next thing to be considered was, whether or not I should go in disguise. Disguise would render it necessary to know how to sustain the character I assumed, which, after all, would only be amusing to others and not to myself ; I therefore determined on being a spectator and not an actor.

Behold me before M. ——'s house. I entered the court; the porter and all the female servants of the house were assembled in the courtyard to see the guests arrive. When he opened the door to admit me, he held an infant on one arm and a boot in the other, and on seeing that I was not disguised, he cried— •

“What! sir, going to the ball, and not disguised?”

“Have you received orders to admit none but masks?”

“I didn't mean that; but it is so much more amusing to be disguised. There are already two ‘postillons de Longjumeau’ up there, and peasants and shepherds in Greek dresses. It is very pretty is that postillion's costume! When my little one has been vaccinated, I will dress him like that every Sunday when I take him to see his godmother.”

I did not stop to listen to the porter, but made my way up the staircase, at the head of which I was met by the master of the house, disguised as a Turk, and a very pretty figure he made. Fancy a very short, very fat man, with a nose almost buried between two bright crimson cheeks, above which there lolled two little green eyes, surmounted by a fragment of eyebrow. Just imagine this individual dressed in a large plaited pair of pantaloons, a short velvet vest ornamented with spangles reaching halfway down his back; and a large cashmere shawl round his waist, and his head surmounted by an enormous white turban. He looked at me for a minute, and then burst into a fit of laughing—

“Ha! ha! ha! I am a Turk, my friend; I am suffocating in this dress; but what will you have?—it is necessary to amuse oneself. How do you find me?”

“You have the air of a pacha.”

“Haven't I? hi! hi! we shall have some fun! Come in. They are dancing in there already.”

I entered the saloon, and found the orchestra in full execution, and making a very considerable noise. It was composed of a pianist, two violinists, a flute-player,

and a big fellow blowing a cornet-à-piston, whose utmost efforts seemed directed to making more noise than all the rest put together. The dancers were not numerous, and consisted but of four persons—two of whom were little girls, who were incessantly getting among people's legs—a masculine-looking woman, habited as a sultana, who was doing her best to teach a middle-aged gentleman how to dance a galop, who, nevertheless, would persist in dancing it as if it were a minuet, and with a gravity that was amusing to contemplate.

I looked about me, and in a recess of one of the windows I observed two gentlemen, who were so still that it seemed as if they were afraid that the least movement would in some way interfere with their disguise. They were in Chinese costume; their garments were very beautiful, and in perfect taste; and they looked from head to foot every inch Chinamen. I asked the host who they were.

"They are exceedingly rich; they each of them have several houses in Paris. They are two brothers, and their signature is in high repute on the Bourse."

"Well, but are they amiable, amusing?"

"Ah! they are very rich—they have beautiful costumes, haven't they?"

"Oh, their costume is magnificent; but don't they speak?"

"I presume they will wake up by and by."

"Have they been here long?"

"More than an hour, and they sat themselves down where you see them, and have never moved since—legs across, and finger in the air, a thoroughly Chinese pose."

"Two rattling fellows; how they must amuse themselves!"

At a short distance from me I saw two men in a very earnest conversation, the one disguised as a marquis, and the other as a knight. Thinking from the animation of their gestures that they were well up in

their parts, I approached them to hear the subject of their discourse, and to my great surprise I found that it referred to the sale of milk in the streets. . . . The dialogue became so animated that the master of the house thrust himself between them with a laugh, and said—

“Gentlemen, gentlemen, I forbid politics. Make the ladies dance! Come, take the ladies out to dance.”

“The ladies! why, where are they?”

“Here they are coming in in crowds. What fun we shall have!”

And the fat Turk waddled off, and addressed some observation to everybody he came against, in the hope of enlivening them, which, however, he was not very successful in doing.

A large gentleman came at this moment from an adjoining room, and commenced a solemn promenade up and down the saloon. He was dressed in plain clothes, but wore a false nose with a large pair of moustaches attached to it. He stared at everybody, himself included, whenever he came near a looking-glass, and appeared to entertain an intimate conviction that everybody must admire him. For my own part I could not see why he should disguise himself with a false nose only at a private ball, still I thought he might have some droll intention to carry out later in the evening.

There was by this time a considerable crowd in the saloon. Costumes of all kinds, more or less incorrect as regarded the design and the materials of which they were made, abounded. These costumes are very well described as *fancy* costumes, and I could only regret that more individuals had not the fancy to assume a disguise more amusing than the eternal camargos, vivandières, &c.; but the reason is, no doubt, that people find it so much easier to put on a *fine* costume than one which would necessitate the display of a certain amount of wit.

Up to this time the most amusing person at the ball



to a spectator was the gentleman who had mounted the false nose. He walked gravely up and down the saloon, and stopped before every lady as if he expected them to address him ; but nobody did address him, and this appeared to vex him considerably. I fancied his nose interfered with his seeing, for I saw him several times run up against chairs and individuals. I felt rather curious to know how he had managed to fasten on the nose without having his hat on. Ah ! a lady approaches him who is without a costume—she speaks to him—I draw near and listen ; that is allowed at a *bal masqué*.

"My friend," said the lady, "are you going to keep your nose on all the evening?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"But it seems to me that there is no person of our acquaintance here ; who is it, then, you want to puzzle?"

"That says nothing ; they look at me a great deal ; they whisper to one another. You don't see that. Oh ! I create an immense sensation!"

"It must worry you very much to have that on your face."

"No, it does not ; it makes me squint a little, but that is all the better. I can assure you nobody will recognise me."

"But since there is nobody here who knows you besides our host—"

"Don't bore me!"

"At least, my friend, you will take it off at supper-time?"

"No, I will not ! Besides, I have stuck it on so tightly with varnish. It hurts the skin a little, but it holds very tight."

"Will you give me a dance or two?"

"Certainly not ! dance with my wife—that would be a sensible thing to do ! Everybody would recognise me at once."

"But as there is nobody here who knows you—"

"Pray let me alone."

The gentleman with the false nose quitted his wife in a pet, and trod upon the feet of everybody who came in his way.

The master of the house was delighted ; there were so many in the ball-room that there was scarcely room to move, but being invited to a ball, they naturally wished to dance. The fat Turk ran hither and thither, chattering and laughing. He came up to me and said—

“I am suffocating in this dress. One must amuse oneself. Let us have some fun !”

The music struck up, and the dancers took their places in the best way they could ; they tried to start, but found their feet glued to the floor. They looked at one another, and asked each other the reason. The Turk threw himself on a seat and laughed till the tears poured down his cheeks ; it was a pleasantry quite in his line ; he had scattered handfuls of resin about the floor so as to render it impossible for the feet of the dancers to slip along.

The ladies began to get angry ; and, in fact, it was rather singular to invite people to a ball, and then to adopt means to prevent them from dancing. At last M. — asked forgiveness, and begged them to dance in another room while he had the ball-room prepared for them.

I wandered into a room where they were playing at *bouillotte*, the stakes were very moderate, almost as if it were a family party. Nevertheless one of the players seemed deeply interested, for after each *coup* he never failed to utter such ejaculations as these :—“I lose !—No, I don’t ; I save my stake !—Ah, I don’t save my stake !—I don’t win !—Ah, I recover my stake !”

Ices were handed round ; the gentleman with the false nose took one, but in attempting to eat it he carried the spoon to his moustaches instead of his mouth, and after many unsuccessful attempts to eat a little without swallowing his moustache at the same time, he was obliged to put it down.

The marquis and the knight were still engaged in an animated discussion, and I thought that it must be respecting the ball; but in passing near them I heard one say :—

“I must have my milk brought to my house every morning, sir—*café au lait* has been my breakfast for the last forty years.”

“You might take it with water.”

“Much obliged !”

These gentlemen were still on the chapter of milk-women.

The master of the house had brought his visitors back to the ball-room, and assured the ladies that their little feet would not now stick to the floor. The music struck up a quadrille, and off went the couples, and the truth of what their host had said was soon manifested, for they had scarcely begun when three of the dancers were on the floor, which was as slippery as if it were ice. The fat Turk began laughing anew, but this time the dancers were seriously angry; and it was not without considerable difficulty that he succeeded in pacifying his visitors. They became calm at last, however, and the Turk sent for the servants to sweep away the soap powder which he had scattered about, and dancing was renewed without any further interruption.

The two Chinese had not fallen, inasmuch as they had not stirred from their places, and their fingers still constantly pointed in the air. I admired the patience of these gentlemen, and racked my brain in the endeavour to conceive what pleasure they could find in being present. At this moment there was a certain murmur in the room, which indicated the arrival of another mask. He wore a Spanish costume, but disguised in a droll manner; a spangled habit with a good many patches on it, a white peruke which was too short, surmounted by a little cap and feather; finally, false calves, on which, being an entomologist, he had impaled a good number of butterflies. I recognised in him a witty young artist, who was of the same opinion

as I, that those who amuse give the most pleasure ; but our Spaniard obtained no success among the persons present, who had no other thought in disguising themselves than to excite admiration. In fact, I heard several persons criticise his costume very severely. On the other hand, they greatly admired the two Chinese, who had the appearance of being glued on to a screen.

All at once there arose a hubbub in one corner of the ball-room, which I found was caused by the gentleman with the false nose having swallowed his moustaches while trying to drink a glass of punch. He was quite purple when his wife ran up, and said—

“ His false nose must be taken off ; it is that which made the liquid go the wrong way.”

Two or three men who were standing by tried to pull it off, but it was so firmly glued on that it required several efforts before this was accomplished. They succeeded at last, however, and the pain this caused brought him to his senses ; when, putting his hand to his face, he discovered his loss, and rushed in a fury from the room, followed by his wife, exclaiming as he did so, “ I did not want to be unmasked. Everybody knows me now !”

By this time the night had considerably advanced, and not a few persons began to wish for the arrival of the two *patés* which were to terminate the *fête*. A table was laid in the dining-room, and in the midst of different articles of confectionary were placed the two objects which had been specially announced.

“ What an original this M—— is,” said the ladies, “ to think of giving us things like that to eat at a ball !”

“ My faith !” said a gentleman, “ since there is nothing else solid, it is necessary we should eat them. They are superb, these *patés*.”

M—— begged two of the gentlemen to open them. I drew up close to the table, suspecting there was some practical joke about to be revealed, and I was not mis-

taken. A hole had no sooner been made in the crust, than out flew a couple of bats, which so frightened the ladies that they uttered the most piercing cries, and fled in all directions. In the midst of the disorder which reigned in the apartment I heard peals of laughter from the obese master of the house, which I could not help joining in, when I saw one of the bats firmly attached to a Scotchman's wig. This pleasantry closed the ball. I left at the same time as the bouillotte player, who continued to repeat as we went down the staircase, "I have won nothing! I have made nothing! I have saved my stake!"

## Le Pelerinage de Ploermel.

PLOUHINEC is a poor hamlet beyond Hennebon, towards the sea. You see nothing round it but *landes*, with here and there little osier beds ; and never has it been known to produce enough grass to rear an ox, nor bran enough to fatten a descendant of the Rohans.\*

But if the inhabitants lack corn and beasts, they have more stones than would be required to build a city, and just outside the hamlet they have a large plain, in which the Korigans† have planted two long rows of stones, which might be taken for an avenue if it led anywhere. It was near here, on the bank of the river Intel, that a man named Marzinne formerly dwelt, who was a rich man for that part ; that is to say, he could salt a pig every year, had as much black bread as he chose to eat, and could treat himself with a new pair of sabots every year at the Feast of Pentecost. Therefore he passed for a man of note and a proud man in his country ; also he had refused the hand of his sister Rozenn to several young bachelors who lived by the daily sweat of their brow. Among these there was one named Bernez, a good labourer and a good Christian, but who possessed nothing but goodwill. He had become acquainted with Rozenn when she was very little, and as she grew up his love grew stronger and stronger,

\* A term by which pigs are known in Brittany.—*Tr.*

† Korigans is the appellation given to the supernatural creatures once known here as fairies.—*Tr.*

so that at last he was as deeply in love as the English are damned—that is to say, hopelessly.

The refusal by Marzinne to give him his sister was a great heartbreak to him ; still he did not lose courage, because Rozenn continued to receive him well. Now, it was one Christmas Eve that the weather was so bad that they could not go to church ; so all the people on the farm, and many of the neighbours, including Bernez, had assembled at Marzinne's house, who, to show his large heart, had caused a supper of black-puddings and stirabout mixed with honey to be prepared ; hence all eyes were turned towards the fireplace save Bernez's, who had no eyes for anything besides his dear Rozenn. The bowl containing the wooden spoons was placed on the table, and the long stools were arranged ready for those who so impatiently awaited the moment when the bowl should receive the contents of the pot, when lo ! the door was pushed roughly open, and an old man entered, and wished everybody a good appetite. This old man was a beggar belonging to Pluvigner, who never by any chance entered a church, and who was held in dread by honest people. He was accused of bewitching cattle, of causing smut in the grain, and of being able to change himself into the likeness of any animal whenever he pleased. Nevertheless, as he wore the garb of poverty, the farmer allowed him to draw near the fire ; moreover, he caused a three-legged stool to be given him, together with a portion of food like the other guests. When the sorcerer had eaten his food, he asked to be allowed to sleep, and Bernez took him into the stable, where there was only an old ass and a half-starved ox. The beggar laid himself down between them for the sake of the warmth, and was about to go to sleep, when midnight sounded. Then the ass pricked up his long ears and turned towards the lean ox, and said in a friendly tone—

“ Well, cousin, how has it fared with you since the last Christmas I spoke to you ? ”

Instead of replying to the question, the horned animal cast a sidelong glance at the mendicant, and said in a grumbling tone—

“It was well worth while for the Trinity to accord us the gift of speech every Christmas Eve in recompence for our ancestors having been present at the birth of Jesus, if we are to have for an auditor a rascal like this beggar.”

“You are very proud, my Lord Bellow,” replied the ass, gaily; “it seems to me that I have the most right to complain—I, who come of a family the head of which formerly carried Christ when he made his entry into Jerusalem, as is shown by the cross which since that time has been imprinted on our-shoulders; but I know how to content myself with what has been accorded me. Besides, don’t you see that the sorcerer is asleep?”

“All his sorceries have not yet enriched him,” replied the ox, “and he damns himself for a very trifling matter. The devil has not even told him of the good chance there will be close here in a few days.”

“What good chance?” asked the ass.

“What, don’t you know that once in every hundred years the stones in the plain of Plouhinec go to the river Intel to drink, and that during this time the treasures they hide remain uncovered?”

“Ah, I remember now,” interposed the ass; “but the stones return so quickly to their places that it is impossible to avoid being crushed by them unless you have a sprig of trefoil in your hand.”

“Also,” added the ox, “the treasures you may thus carry off become dust and ashes if you do not give in return a baptized soul; the death of a Christian is necessary before the demon will allow you to enjoy the riches of Plouhinec in peace.”

The mendicant listened to this conversation almost without daring to breathe.

“Ah! dear animals,” thought he to himself, “you



have made me richer than all the inhabitants of Vannes and Lorient put together. Don't disturb yourselves, the Pluvigner sorcerer will not in future damn himself for nothing." The next morning he got up and went into the fields to seek for the trefoil. He had to search long and to plunge deeper into the country, where the air is warmer and plants remain always green. Finally, on New Year's Eve he re-appeared at Plouhinec with the mien of a weasel that has found its way to the dovecote. As he was passing along the *landes* he saw Bernez very busy in cutting something on the highest of the stones.

"God save me," cried the sorcerer, laughing; "do you want to scoop yourself a house in that great stone?"

"No," said Bernez, quietly; "but as I have got nothing to do just now, I thought if I traced a cross on one of these cursed stones, I should do something acceptable to God, who sooner or later will reward me for it."

"You want something of Him, then?" observed the old man.

"Every Christian desires Him to save his soul," replied the young man.

"And haven't you something to say to Him about Rozenn?" asked the mendicant in a lower tone.

Bernez looked hard at him.

"Ah, you know that," he resumed; "after all, there is neither shame nor sin in it, since if I seek the girl it is to lead her before the priest. Unfortunately, Marzinne desires to have a brother-in-law who can count more shillings than I possess farthings."

"And what if I were to cause thee to have more pounds than Marzinne himself possesses shillings," said the sorcerer in a low tone.

"You!" cried Bernez.

"I!"

"What do you want of me for that?"

"Only to be remembered in thy prayers."

"There will be no necessity to compromise my salvation?"

"There will be no necessity for anything but courage."

"Then tell me what is to be done," said Bernez, dropping his hammer; "I am prepared even if it were to expose myself to twenty deaths; for I have less desire to live than to marry."

When the mendicant saw that he was so well disposed, he told him how that night the treasures of the *landes* would be laid open, but without telling him how to evade the stones at the moment when they returned. The young man thought that nothing more was required than boldness and promptitude, therefore he said—

"As truly as there are three Persons in God, I will profit, old man, by the opportunity, and I shall always hold a portion of my blood at your service for what you have told me. Leave me to finish the cross I have begun to cut on this stone, and then I will join you near the little osier bed at the hour agreed upon."

Bernez kept his word, and arrived at the place agreed upon an hour before midnight. He found the mendicant already there, provided with a bag in each hand and a third hung round his neck.

"Sit down, young man," said he, "and think of what you will do when you have gold, silver, and precious stones at your disposal."

The young man seated himself on the ground and replied—

"When I shall have silver at my disposal, I will give to my gentle Rozenn everything she wishes to have, from cotton to silk, from bread up to oranges."

"And when you have unlimited gold?" added the sorcerer.

"When I have as much gold as I want, I will make all Rozenn's relatives rich, and all the friends of her relatives to the uttermost bounds of the parish."

"And when you have precious stones by handfuls?" concluded the old man.

"Then," cried Bernez, "I will make every man on earth rich and happy, and will say to them that Rozenn willed it."

While they were conversing thus the hour of midnight arrived. At that instant there was a great noise on the *landes*, and they saw by the light of the stars all the great stones leave their places and dart towards the river Intel. They descended the side of the hill with a rushing noise, and striking against each other like giants who had taken a drop too much, they passed the two men and disappeared in the darkness.

Then the mendicant arose and darted towards the plain followed by Bernez, and, on the places where a few seconds before great stones stood, they saw holes filled with gold, silver, and precious stones. Bernez uttered a cry of admiration, and, after crossing himself, began to fill his pockets; but the sorcerer did not give himself the trouble to make the sign of the cross; he at once began to fill his bags, all the time keeping a sharp ear towards the river that he might hear when the stones were on their way back. He had just filled the third bag, and Bernez his pockets, when a dull murmuring sound was heard like that of a storm in the distance. It was the stones which were returning from the river to resume their places. They rushed along like coursers at full speed, crushing all before them. When the young man saw them he rose and exclaimed—

"Virgin Mary, we are lost!"

"I am not," said the sorcerer, taking hold of the talisman with which he had provided himself; "for my salvation is in my hand; but it is necessary that a Christian should lose his life to assure my possession of these riches, and thy bad angel put thee in my way, therefore renounce Rozenn and prepare to die."

While he was thus speaking, the army of stones arrived, but he held his magical bouquet towards them, and they divided, and some went on his right hand

and some on his left. Bernez believed that his last hour was come, and threw himself on his knees and shut his eyes expecting instant death, but a great stone stopped just before him and served as a barrier to defend him from the others. Bernez raised his wondering eyes and saw that the stone which stood before him was that on which he had engraved the cross. From that time it had become a baptized stone which could not hurt a Christian. It remained immoveable before the young man until all the other stones had taken their places, then it dashed forward like a bird of prey to take its own, overtaking on its way the mendicant, the weight of whose sacks had retarded his movements. When he saw the stone coming he stood still and held out the magic plants, but the stone was now free from the enchantments of the demon, and struck him down and passed over him as if he had been an insect.

Thus, Bernez had, over and above what he collected in his own pockets, all the gold, and silver, and precious stones which the mendicant had put into his bags, and he was a rich man, and espoused Rozenn, and they lived happily together all the rest of their days.

## Une Soiree Bourgeoise.

P. DE K.

ANYBODY who passed along the Rue Grenetat on a certain evening, would have remarked a strong glare of light shining from the four windows of the second floor of one of the houses. It had not the brilliancy of the "Cercle des Etrangers," but still it announced something. Those four windows, so equally illuminated, had an air of rejoicing; and the laborious inhabitants of the Rue Grenetat, who are not in the habit of incurring any great expense for lights, said, looking at the windows, "Certainly there is something extraordinary going on this evening at M. Lupot's."

M. Lupot was an honest tradesman, recently retired from business. After having sold paper for thirty years without having once been obliged to have recourse to a neighbour or a friend for assistance to enable him to meet his bills—M. Lupot having amassed an annual income of eight thousand francs—sold his business, and quitted trade to give himself up entirely to the pleasures of domestic life; to be able to devote himself to the study of his wife's happiness in small matters. Félicité Lupot was an essentially "cool" woman, who was in her proper position behind the counter, so long as she had not to give change for a piece of money exceeding five francs in value, but who lost her head whenever this happened. That, however, did not prevent her from making her husband happy (which

proves that wit is not always necessary to effect that), nor from giving him two children, a son and a daughter.

The young lady was the elder ; she had just attained her seventeenth year, and M. Lupot, who had spared neither pains nor expense on her education, flattered himself that he would be able to find her a husband somewhere else than in his own line of life, the more that Madlle. Celanire gave no indication of a taste for commerce, and believed herself to have a decided vocation for the fine arts ever since she had, when twelve years of age, drawn the portrait of her father as a shepherd, with a red crayon ; and because she had, one year later, played "Je suis Lindor" on the piano from memory.

M. Lupot was proud of his daughter, who was both painter and musician, an inch taller than her father, held herself as upright as a Prussian grenadier, made a curtsy like Taglioni, had an aquiline nose three times as long as an ordinary nose, a mouth of the same description, and eyes so penetrating and so small that they were not easily found.

Little Lupot, her brother, was not quite seven years of age ; whatever he did was excused, on the ground of his extreme youth, and Master Ascagne profited by this indulgence to get into mischief from morning till night ; for his father loved him too much to scold him, and his mother was too easy to put herself in a passion.

Now, it happened that one morning M. Lupot said to himself, "I have a very pretty fortune, I have a charming family, I have a wife who was never angry in her life ; but that is not sufficient in this world to cause one to be invited into good society, to be sought after ; in short, to cause me to be talked about. Since I retired from the writing-paper and the wafers, my society has been composed of none but some friends, tradesmen like myself, who have come to indulge in a game of vingt-et-un, or loto ; but I want to see something better than that. My daughter ought not to live in such a narrow circle as this ; my daughter has

a pronounced vocation for the arts ; I ought to receive artists. I will give evening parties, teas, and so forth, if necessary ; they shall play bouillotte and écarté, for my daughter holds loto in horror ; in fact, I am determined that people shall talk of my parties, and that Celanire shall there find a husband worthy of her."

M. Lupot, while revolving this in his mind, was seated beside his wife, who was reclining in her great easy-chair, stroking the cat which lay purring on her knees, and turning to her he said—

"My dear Félicité, I intend to give evening parties, to receive a great deal of company. We live in a too narrow sphere for our daughter, who is born for the arts, and for our Ascagne, who, I believe, will one day create a sensation."

Madame Lupot, without ceasing to caress her cat, replied, "Very well ; what has that to do with me ? Do I prevent you from receiving company ? Mind, however, that it does not give me any trouble. Besides, don't reckon on me to do anything."

"You shall do nothing, Félicité, but the honours of your drawing-room."

"But that involves the necessity of getting up every instant."

"You do that with considerable grace, my wife. . . . I will order everything, and Celanire will assist me."

Madlle. Celanire was enchanted at her father's project. "Oh ! yes, papa," she cried ; "invite a great many people ; I will practise my music, so that I may play some dances if necessary, and will finish my head of Belisarius, in order that you may have it framed before that evening."

As for little Ascagne, he began dancing about the room, saying at the same time, "I shall take tea, punch, and cakes ; I will take some of everything !"

Then M. Lupot commenced his journeys up and down ; he went to see the friends of his friends, people whom he scarcely knew, and engaged them to come to his party, and to bring their friends with them. At

one time M. Lupot had supplied rose-coloured paper to a lady who taught the piano, and pencils to a designer ; he went to his old customers and begged them to honour his *soirée* with their presence, and to bring other artists, their friends, with them. In short, M. Lupot took such pains to get a numerous party together, that for four days he traversed Paris in every direction, spent a good many francs in cab hire, and caught a severe cold, so that it is not all pleasure to give a *soirée*.

- The great day, or rather the great evening, had arrived. All the lamps were lighted ; they had even borrowed some of their neighbours, because Celanire was of opinion that those they possessed did not give light enough. It was the first time that M. Lupot had borrowed anything of his neighbours, but then it was the first time that he had given a *soirée*.

M. Lupot began to busy himself from the first thing in the morning in preparations for the evening party ; he ordered cakes and refreshments, brushed the tables, bought cards, &c. &c., while his wife remained quietly seated in her easy-chair, only saying now and then, "I am afraid that it is very tiring to receive company."

Celanire had finished her *Belisarius*, which strongly resembled the picture of Bluebeard, and it was honoured with a rich Gothic frame, and hung in the most conspicuous part of the drawing-room. Madlle. Lupot was beautifully dressed for the occasion, and expected to make a great impression on the visitors.

Ascagne had a new dress on, which, however, did not prevent him from turning head over heels on the carpet, from climbing upon the furniture, from taking the cards to build houses, and from opening the closets to lay hands surreptitiously on the cakes.

Sometimes M. Lupot lost patience with him, and then he would say to his wife, "Madame, make your son be quiet !" Then madame would reply, without looking at him, "Make him be quiet yourself, sir ; you know very well it is for you to correct him."



Eight o'clock had struck and no visitors had arrived. Mademoiselle Lupot looked at her father, who looked at his wife, who was attentively looking at her cat. The head of the family murmured now and then, "Is it possible that our grand *soirée* will end in our passing the evening by ourselves?"

And he threw piteous glances on the lamps, the tables, and the other ceremonious preparations. Mademoiselle Celanire sighed, looked at her dress, and looked in the glass. Madame Lupot seemed the only person who was wholly indifferent, and who, with her usual indolence, contented herself with saying, "It was well worth while, certainly, to turn everything here upside down."

As to the juvenile Ascagne, he danced about the room, chanting "If nobody comes, we shall have all the more cake to eat."

At last the bell rang; it was a family from the Rue St. Denis, retired perfumers, who had preserved of their former habits that of covering themselves with a variety of odours; the effect of their entry into a drawing-room was as if a host of scent-bottles had been suddenly opened.

These were soon followed by a number of other persons. M. Lupot did not know the half of those whom he received, and who were brought by other persons with whom he was but slightly acquainted; yet he was delighted, enraptured. Some would say to him, on presenting a fashionably-dressed individual, "This is one of our first pianists, who has been good enough to sacrifice a grand concert to come to your little *soirée*."

Next it was a singer, *homme délicieux*, the sought-for of all *réunions*, and who, though very hoarse, would consent to ravish the company with one of his latest compositions.

This one has received the first prize at the Conservatoire, a sucking Boieldieu, who will write operas when the directors are sufficiently enlightened to request him to do so.

This other is a painter ; he has sent paintings to the Academy, and has had an overwhelming success. It is true no one bought his paintings, but it was because he would not sell them to persons who were incapable of appreciating them. In short, on all sides of him M. Lupot saw none but people of the first merit ; his head was turned, he was ravished—transported, he could not find words enough to express the pleasure he derived in receiving them in his *salon* : and for them he neglected his old friends, disdained his old acquaintances ; he scarcely spoke to them ; it seemed that the new comers, strangers whom he saw for the first time, alone merited his care and all his attention.

Madame Lupot was tired of getting up, saluting, and presenting a chair, but her daughter was radiant with happiness. Lupot went and came from one room to the other, rubbing his hands as if he had just bought all Paris ; and the little Ascagne was never seen except with his mouth full.

It is not sufficient to receive a great many people ; it is necessary to know how to amuse them, and that is a thing that few persons know how to accomplish, even those most habituated to giving evening parties. At some, one is bored ; one yawns in full dress ; one is limited to conversation which is neither friendly, frank, nor gay ; at others, one is satiated with hearing the host, who, if he is a singer or player, will not quit his piano, from a fear that somebody else may give pleasure to the company ; there are others where the object of the reception is play, and where the host does not care in the least whether his guests amuse themselves or not ; he plays, and that is all he cares about, the rest is a matter of indifference to him. How few houses there are where they know how to receive their visitors ; for it is necessary to have tact, *esprit*, and self-abnegation, which qualities are doubtless very rare, since so few persons exhibit these qualities when they give *soirées*.

M. Lupot continued to go from room to room, smiling, saluting, and rubbing his hands; but the new comers, who had not accepted the invitation of the worthy ex-tradesman for the mere purpose of seeing him perform these operations, began to say to one another, even loud enough to be heard, "Oh, ah—do people spend their evening here for the purpose of looking at each other?—that would be very amusing."

M. Lupot wished to open a conversation with a fat gentleman in spectacles, who wore a white cravat tied in a most elaborate knot, and who indulged almost continually in a contemptuous grimace as he regarded the company. Some one had told the estimable Lupot that this gentleman was a literary man, and that he would perhaps condescend to read or recite some verses of his own composition.

The ex-stationer hemmed three times to clear his throat before daring to accost the stout gentleman; at last he ventured to say—

"I am enchanted to see an author of monsieur's force at my *soirée*."

"Ah!—it is you, sir, who are the master of the house?"

"I flatter myself I am—with my wife, who is sitting there. There is my daughter—that tall young person who holds herself so upright; she draws, and plays the piano. I have a son also, a little demon; that was he who ran between my legs just now. Oh, he is a sharp little fellow."

"Sir, that which I cannot understand—which quite passes my comprehension, is, how persons who give *soirées* can live in such a street as the Rue Grenetat? The street is a horror!—it is frightful! muddy the whole year; and in a quarter which is dirty, noisy, and stinking!"

"I have, notwithstanding, lived here thirty years, and, during that time, I am not aware . . . ."

"Ah, sir, I should have died thirty times over in that time. When one lives in the Rue Grenetat, it is

necessary to say adieu to artists and renounce society ; for you will agree with me that it is a trap to induce a certain class to come to this street."

M. Lupot left off smiling and rubbing his hands, he quitted the gentleman in the spectacles, whose conversation had not amused him, and approached a group of young men, who seemed occupied in regarding the Belisarius of Madlle. Celanire.

"They are admiring my daughter's performance," said M. Lupot to himself; "let me try, without appearing to do so, to hear the remarks of these artists."

The young men continued their observations, which were mingled with jeering laughs.

"Can you make out what that head is?"

"Oh! *ma foi*, no! I confess I never saw anything so droll before!"

"Why, my dear fellow, it is Belisarius."

"Nonsense!—not possible! *That* Belisarius! it is the portrait of some grocer, a relative, probably."

"Just look at that nose—that mouth!"

"It is frightful—to dare to frame such an infamous thing as that. Why, it is not worth the portrait of the 'Wandering Jew' that they sell for two sous, song included."

M. Lupot had heard enough. He slipped away from the group without uttering a word; he held down his head, and sneaked towards the piano.

The young pianist, who had sacrificed a grand concert to come to the "soirée bourgeoise," came and sat himself down at the piano; he ran his fingers over the instrument, and exclaimed—

"Ah! What a hurdy-gurdy! What a tin kettle! How can one be expected to play on such a wretched instrument? It is impossible; its notes sound like those of the spinnet, and it is not even in tune."

Yet, notwithstanding that, the pianist remained at the piano, and continued to play; but he struck the keys with all his might; at each instant he broke a

cord, and when this occurred, he burst into a laugh, saying—

“Good! there goes another! There will be none left directly!”

M. Lupot reddened to the tips of his ears; he had a strong inclination to say to the celebrated player, “I didn’t ask you, sir, to come and spend the evening with me in order that you might break all the cords of my piano; leave the instrument, if you find it a bad one, but do not prevent others from amusing themselves upon it.”

However, good M. Lupot dared not say that, though it would have been quite rational to do so; so he stood still and listened to the snapping of the cords, though it pained him not a little to hear them go.

Madlle. Celanire had drawn near her father; she was grieved beyond measure at the treatment to which her piano was subjected; she could not play her air; but she reckoned on making herself amends in singing a romance which an elderly neighbour had promised to accompany on his guitar.

It was not without considerable difficulty that M. Lupot obtained a little silence and attention for his daughter’s song. At sight of the ancient neighbour and his guitar, something like stifled laughter was heard here and there; it is true that he resembled the itinerant troubadour who haunts our squares, and that his guitar was shaped like an ancient cittern. A certain degree of curiosity was excited to hear how he would acquit himself. He began by beating the measure with his foot, and wagging his head, which gave him very much the appearance of one of the China mandarins one sometimes sees in the windows of a grocer’s shop. However, Madlle. Lupot risked her romance; but she could never succeed in catching the measure of her accompanist, who, instead of following the singer, appeared to have made up his mind to follow nothing but the motions of his head and feet. The romance produced a bad effect;

Celanire didn't know where she was ; she lost a note, then a second, and finally lost her head : and instead of hearing his daughter applauded, M. Lupot had the mortification of hearing some young men say, with a laugh—

“They would not tolerate such singing even at the *Café des Aveugles* !”

“I will have the tea handed round,” said the ex-stationer to himself ; “that will, perhaps, put the company in good humour again.” And M. Lupot ran to give orders to his servants, who never having seen such a numerous assemblage before, didn't know what they were about, and broke the cups and saucers in trying to make haste.

The tea appeared to excite almost as much discontent among the company as the other attempts to amuse them had done, and M. Lupot was in despair.

Madame Lupot said nothing, but she was in an exceedingly bad humour ; for she had put on a new head-dress which she thought charming, and a young lady had said to her—

“Ah, madame ! how badly your head-dress suits you ! Why, it must be one worn under the *ancien régime*—that shape is never worn now-a-days.”

“Nevertheless, madame, I bought it in the Rue St. Martin only two days ago.”

“But, madame, can you expect to find the latest fashions in that quarter ? I would advise you never to put on that head-dress again, it makes you look a hundred years old.”

“It is well worth while to fatigue oneself by receiving company to hear such compliments as that,” said Madame Lupot to herself.

The stout gentleman in spectacles who had expressed his inability to conceive how anybody could live in the Rue Grenetat, wished, nevertheless, not to have come there for nothing ; he seated himself in an easy-chair which he had placed in the middle of the room, and gave notice to the company that he intended to recite some verses of his own composition.

His announcement did not appear to confer an overwhelming pleasure on the company ; but they arranged themselves, as in politeness bound, as if they meant to pay attention. The gentleman took snuff, hemmed, desired the doors might be closed, asked for a glass of *eau sucrée*, and ran his fingers through his hair. After amusing himself in this way for a little time, he began. He recited his verses in a voice that made the windows rattle. He had not been long at this, and already a very pretty tableau of crimes, death, and scaffolds had tickled the ears of the visitors, when an unexpected crash was heard in a neighbouring apartment. This crash was caused by little Ascagne, who, in trying to get at a cake placed on the top of a pile of plates, had caused both cake and plates to fall down upon him. Of course he roared very much, and equally of course his father ran to see what was the matter, and the company followed the father, very glad to escape out of hearing of the poet, who, finding himself without auditors, became furious, and got up and walked out of the drawing-room, murmuring as he did so, "How could I have had the weakness to read my poetry in the Rue Grenetat?"

Ascagne was led away crying because two plates had been broken on his nose ; and as the reading of poetry was at an end, and music was now out of the question, tables were got out for card-playing. M. Lupot was called upon to take his place at an *écarté* table for the purpose of betting when money was wanted on one side ; and was astounded when he was called on to pay fifteen francs at one time, and twenty francs at another. The honest man had never staked a larger sum than a half-franc piece at one time in his life before, still he was afraid to refuse, and, as if to crown his vexation, one of the winners, in reaching over to take up his money, upset and broke one of the borrowed lamps.

The hour for the company to retire, now so evidently wished for by the worthy bourgeois, at last arrived. All these fine people disappeared, few of them

even wishing good-night to the man who had taken so much trouble to receive them. The Lupot family were alone. Madame was overwhelmed with fatigue, and piqued at having been told that her head was not well-dressed. Celanire had tears in her eyes because they had laughed at her singing and her drawing. Ascagne pale and ill because he had eaten too much cake. M. Lupot looked in a state of consternation as he said to himself, "I have lost ninety francs!"

At last M. Lupot spoke aloud:—"It is all over! I will give no more grand *soirées*; I begin to believe that it is a foolish thing to try and get out of one's sphere. Decidedly, my daughter, I will look for a husband for you in the *pains à cacheter*."



## My Uncle Maurice.\*

It is with the destiny of human beings as with auroras ; some dart upwards with dazzling coloured rays, others bury themselves in sombre clouds. Uncle Maurice's was one of these latter. He entered the world a poor, feeble little creature, who all thought could not live ; but notwithstanding these anticipations, which might be almost called hope, he continued to live, though suffering and deformed.

He possessed none of the graces of childhood, nor did he experience any of its joys. Oppressed, owing to his weakness, ridiculed, in consequence of his ugliness, the little hunchback in vain opened his arms to the world ; the world passed him by and pointed the finger of scorn at him.

However, he had a mother, and upon her the child lavished the devotion of a heart repulsed by everybody besides. In this refuge he was not unhappy. When he attained the age at which man takes his place in life, he became the guardian of one of the little custom-houses which guarded the entrance to his natal town. Shut up in this little habitation of a few feet square, he had no other distraction but writing and reading and the visits of his mother.

On fine summer days she used to bring her work to the door of his cabin and sit under the shade of the vines planted by her son ; and though she remained

\* This and the two succeeding extracts are condensed from the French of Emile Souvestre.—*Tr.*

silent, her presence was a pleasure to the hunchback ; he could hear the click of her long knitting-needles, he could see the sad sweet face of her who had undergone so many trials, trials which she had so courageously supported ; from time to time he could stretch out his hand and lay it on her bent shoulders, and then she would look up, exchange a loving look and smile with him, and he would drop down in his seat and resume his writing.

It was a sad, sad day to him when the time arrived for her to leave the world. The poor old woman fell ill, and in a few days all hope of her recovery had departed. Maurice nearly lost his senses at the mere thought of a separation from the only being in the whole world who loved him. He knelt beside her bed, he called her by the most tender names, he held her hand in his as closely as if he hoped by that means to preserve her from the grasp of death, and bedewed it with his tears. His mother tried to respond to his caresses, but her voice had left her, her hand was cold, and it was with a dying effort that she pressed her lips to his forehead—she fell back on her pillow—there was a little flash of the eye, and the soul had quitted its earthly home !

They tried to get Maurice away from the room, but he would not listen to them. “Dead !” he exclaimed ; “dead ! she who has never quitted me in her life ; she who alone of all the world loved me ! Oh, mother, mother ! what remains for me now on this earth ?”

He started—he seemed to have heard a voice which said—God ! He murmured no longer, but bowed in submission to His will.

It was just about this time that I began to be acquainted with him. I often went to see him at the little municipal custom-house, attracted by the willingness with which he lent himself to my childish amusements, the pretty stories he told me, and the free permission he gave me to pluck his flowers. Deprived of the graces of appearance which attract children,

he was more than indulgent to them when they placed confidence in him. Without seeking to induce them to come to him, he was always happy to receive them. Aversion and disdain he bore with patient gentleness, and staggering beneath the cross of life, he, in reply to the thoughtless insults and cruel jests passed upon him, only repeated to himself the words of Christ, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

No other *employé* showed so much probity, zeal, and intelligence in the performance of his duties; but those who knew his value, and who had it in their power to reward him according to his deserts, were repulsed by his deformity, and preferred to advance those whose appearance was more pleasing to them; thinking, apparently, that in suffering him to retain the humble appointment that gave him the means of living they were even doing him a favour. Uncle Maurice supported the injustice as he did the contempt; he looked on high and confided in the justice of Him who could not be deceived.

He lodged in an old house in the suburbs, where many others equally poor, though less isolated than he, also lodged. There was one, however, whose life seemed as solitary as his own. She dwelt in the garret, into which neither wind nor rain had any difficulty in penetrating. Pale, silent, and plain-looking, she had nothing to recommend her but the resignation which she showed under her poverty. She never spoke to one of her neighbours, nor was the sound of singing ever known to proceed from her wretched apartment. Wrapped in a profound melancholy, as in a species of shroud, she worked incessantly and without the smallest relief in the way of amusement. Her evident weakness touched Maurice's heart; he tried to enter into conversation with her, but her answers, though gentle, were brief, and it was easy for him to see that she preferred silence and isolation, and the little hunchback did not again address her.

But working incessantly, as Toinette did, she was

only just able to earn her dailybread, and could save nothing for the future ; so that when the time came when there was no work to be had, she sank at once into utter destitution. Maurice learnt this, and also that the shopkeepers with whom she had been in the habit of dealing, refused to give her credit, and immediately went to them and made himself responsible for whatever they might supply her with.

Things went on in this way for some months. The poor seamstress was unable to get constant work, and at last became frightened at the debts she was incurring with the tradespeople. She sought an explanation on this point, and this led to her discovering all.

Her first impulse was to seek uncle Maurice, throw herself on her knees, and express her gratitude in heartfelt terms. Gratitude seems to have melted the ice which numbed her heart.

Freed from the embarrassment of secrecy, the little hunchback was enabled to make his benefits more efficacious. Toinette became to him a sister. Since the death of his mother it was the first time that he had been able to connect the existence of another to his own. The young girl showed herself sensible of his kindness ; but all his efforts to remove the melancholy that oppressed her were unavailing ; she was evidently deeply touched by his kindness, and at times expressed her thanks in the warmest manner ; but she never confided to him the cause of her grief, nor indeed did her protector seek to discover it, it was only too great happiness for him to have somebody to love.

Insensibly a feeling of hope sprang up in the hunchback's heart to which he had all his life been a stranger. The girl was without personal attractions, without friends, and poor as she well could be. "Was it possible," he asked himself, "that she might, from being accustomed to him, have overcome the aversion which his appearance was calculated to excite ? She appeared to regard him with a compassionate affection. What more could he expect ? After weeks of doubt and

hesitation he at last decided to speak to her on the subject.

It was one evening after he had returned to his lodgings, that he directed his steps to the garret in which she lived. His heart beat fast, and his emotion was great as he ascended the steps of the narrow staircase. At the moment he laid his hand on the handle of the door the sound of a strange voice reached him ; he pushed it open and entered, and saw Toinette, her head resting on the shoulder of a young man in the dress of a sailor, and sobbing as if her heart would break. As soon as she saw my uncle, she ran to him, and exclaimed eagerly—

“Oh ! come, come ! it is he whom I believed dead ! It is Julian, my betrothed !”

Maurice staggered back ; he understood it all in an instant. It seemed as if the earth was reeling beneath him, and that his heart was about to break, but the same voice which had comforted him beside the deathbed of his mother, echoed in his ear under this new affliction. His courage returned ; there still remained to him the greatest of all comforters—God.

When the marriage took place, he it was who accompanied them to the altar, and afterwards far on the road to their new abode ; and, after wishing them all the happiness denied to himself, returned to his solitary but resigned existence in the old house in the suburbs.

In this house his life ended, shunned by men, but not, as he said, by the *Father who is in heaven*. He felt His presence everywhere, and that amply compensated him for all the rest. When he died it was with a smile on his face, like that of an exile who was embarking to return to his native country.

## Michel Arout.

WHILE arranging my books this morning, Genevieve entered with a little basket of fruit, which I am in the habit of purchasing of her once a week. For the twenty years that I have lived in this part of the town, I have been accustomed to purchase what fruit I required at her little shop. I might, perhaps, be better served elsewhere, but Genevieve has few customers ; to leave her, therefore, would be doing her a wrong and wilfully causing her pain. It seems to me that the length of time during which I have been a customer, has led to the contraction of a kind of tacit obligation towards her, and that my custom has become her property.

She placed her basket on the table, and as I wanted her husband, who is a cabinet-maker, to add some shelves to my bookcase, she went down at once to send him to me.

While she was speaking I did not notice any change in her manner, but when she had left the room it suddenly occurred to me that she was sad, and that she was labouring under some affliction.

Poor woman ! her early years of married life had been attended with so much suffering that she might well hope that she had paid her debt in this respect. If I were to live a century I should never forget the circumstance which led to my knowing her, and which gained for her my respect.

It was when I first came to live in this suburb that

I remarked her almost empty shop, in which I scarcely ever saw a person enter ; and it was from this cause that I was induced to make my modest purchases there. I have always preferred these poor little shops from a kind of instinct. I get a less choice there, and fewer advantages ; but it seems to me that my buying there is a testimony of sympathy for a brother in poverty. These small businesses are almost always the sole resource of the widow and the orphan. In these cases the object of the shopkeeper is not to enrich himself, but to live. The purchase you make there is something more than an exchange, it is a good action.

Genevieve was still young at that time, although she had lost the appearance of youth, a flower which suffering fades so early among the women of the masses. Her husband, a clever cabinet maker enough, had gradually become unused to labour, and to use the language of the Paris workshops, had become a "worshipper of Saint Monday." Working only two or three days a week, his earnings barely sufficed to pay for his drink at the wine-shop ; consequently, on Genevieve devolved the necessity of providing for the expenses of the household.

I had entered the shop one evening to make one or two trifling purchases, when I heard the sounds of an angry voice from the little back parlour. I could also hear the sound of several women's voices, and among them that of Genevieve, who seemed to be crying. On glancing through the window I could discern the poor woman standing up, with a baby in her arms, while a country-looking woman appeared to be demanding the money due to her for nursing the child. Genevieve had, no doubt, exhausted all her means of persuasion and excuse, and was weeping bitterly without attempting to offer any further remark in reply. Excited by the vice so strongly developed among rustics, avarice (only too well justified by the miseries of rural existence), and by the disappointment caused by not receiving the expected pay due to her for nursing the child, she broke forth into a torrent of invectives and threats. I could

not help listening to this sad discussion, not daring to interfere in it, and yet not thinking of retiring. While I was standing there, Michel Arout entered the shop. It was evident that he had come from the wine-shop. His blouse was without a belt, and unfastened at the neck ; he held his cap in his hand, for he had just picked it up out of the mud ; his hair was in disorder, his eyes glassy, and his face had the pallor of drunkenness. He staggered into the shop, looked about him with a vacant stare, and called Genevieve.

The latter gave a cry on hearing his voice, and rushed into the shop, but at the sight of the miserable being who in vain endeavoured to keep himself in an upright position, she stopped, pressed the infant more closely to her bosom, and bent over it in silent anguish.

The countrywoman and a neighbour had followed her into the shop.

"Now then," exclaimed the former, in an exasperated tone, "am I to be paid?"

"Ask her husband for the money," said the neighbour, ironically, pointing to him as he stood supporting himself from falling by leaning on the counter.

"Ah ! that's the father, is it ? Well, he's a pretty fellow ! Not got a halfpenny to pay hard-working people, and yet can stupify himself with wine like that."

The drunkard raised his head.

"With what ? with what ?" he stammered ; "who is talking of wine ? I haven't drunk anything but brandy ! But I will go back and have some wine now ! Wife, give me some money, there are some friends who are waiting for me at the public-house."

Genevieve did not answer a word ; so he managed to get the till open, and fumbled about to try to find some money.

"You see how the money goes," said the neighbour to the nurse ; "how can the poor creature pay you when everything is taken away from her as fast as she earns it ?"



"Is that my fault?" asked the nurse, sharply; "they owe me the money, and, one way or another, they must pay me!"

And then giving way to the flux of words habitual with countrywomen, she recounted at great length all the attentions she had lavished on the child, and the expenses of which he had been the occasion. The more she talked, the more she seemed to feel her rights, and the more indignant she became. The poor mother, who was no doubt afraid that her violence would frighten the infant, re-entered the back parlour and laid the infant in a cradle.

Whether the nurse saw in this act a fixed determination to evade her claims, or whether she was blinded by anger, she dashed into the room after her, and I heard the sound of a scuffle, soon mingled with the cries of the infant. The joiner, who was still trying to find some money in the till, seemed to receive a shock as the sound reached him; he looked up, and at the same instant Genevieve appeared at the door, holding in her arms the infant, of which the nurse was seeking to deprive her. She ran to the counter and tried to shelter herself behind her husband, beseeching him to protect his son.

The drunken man drew himself up with a start, like one suddenly awoke from sleep.

"My son!" he stammered; "what son?"

His glance fell on the child, and a vague gleam of intelligence shot across his countenance.

"Robert," he exclaimed . . . " 'tis Robert!"

He tried to steady himself on his feet to take the child; but he was too tottering. The exasperated nurse approached him.

"My money, or I will take the little one away again!" she cried. "It is I who have fed him and brought him up; if you don't pay for what it has cost to keep him, he ought to be like one dead to you. I won't go till I get either my money or the child."

"And what would you make of him?" asked Genevieve, pressing the infant to her bosom.

"A foundling!" replied the nurse, harshly; "the hospital would be a better parent than you, since it pays for the little ones it has nursed."

At the word foundling Genevieve uttered an exclamation of horror. With her arms folded round her infant, whose head was pressed closely to her bosom and her hands spread out over him, she stood with her back to the wall like a lioness protecting her young. One of her neighbours and myself looked on at this scene without knowing how to interfere. As to Michel, he stood there staring first at one, then at the other, evidently trying to comprehend what was going forward. At last he seemed to recover a little intelligence; and with what appeared a prodigious effort, he exclaimed, "Wait!" and darting towards a pail of water he buried his head in it several times. This ablution seemed to dissipate a part of his drunkenness; he glanced at us, then turned to Genevieve, and his countenance lighted up as he caught sight of the infant.

"Robert!" he exclaimed, taking the child in his arms, to the evident dislike of the mother, who stood with her arms extended fearing he would drop it. The nurse resumed her demands, threatening to avail herself of the assistance of the law. Michel listened attentively until he comprehended her meaning, then gave the child back to his wife, and asked,—

"How much do we owe her?"

The nurse ran over rapidly the items for which they were indebted to her, amounting, altogether, to a little more than thirty francs. The joiner felt first one pocket, then the other, but without finding anything. He was beginning to curse his careless and debauched habits, when he suddenly thought of his watch, and pulling out an enormous one, he held it above his head:

"Here is your money," he exclaimed, with a laugh; "a first-class watch, A 1! I always said to myself that it would quench my thirst some day when I had no money, but it's the little one that has drunk it, and not I. . . . Ha! ha! ha! . . Go and sell it,

neighbour, and if that is not enough, you can have my earrings. Here, pull them out, Genevieve; it shall never be said that you suffered insult on account of your child. Take all this to the goldsmith's, and pay the nurse. Give me the baby, and I will put him to bed."

He took it from its mother's arms, and carried it with a firm step to the cradle.

It was easy to observe the change in Michel from this day. He broke off his relations with his dissipated companions. He went to his work regularly every morning, and returned home to his wife and child as regularly every evening; at last he took a little workshop adjoining that kept by his wife, and worked on his own account.

They would have been very well off now if it had not been for the expense of educating their son. He had been from one school to another in proportion as he grew up, studied mathematics, drawing, and other arts that could be useful to him in following his father's profession, and had only begun to work within the last few months. Up to this time the resources of this hardworking family had been expended in fitting their son for taking a foremost place in his trade; and, fortunately, these sacrifices were not made in vain; the seed thus sown had brought forth fruit, and the days of harvest were at hand. . . .

While my thoughts were occupied in these recollections Michel arrived, and began to busy himself in fixing the shelves in the place I had pointed out. His face, from the excesses of his youth and the hard labour of his later years, was deeply furrowed; his hair thin and grey, and his shoulders bent. One saw in his whole appearance that of a man suffering under great depression. He answered my questions in monosyllables, and like a man who wished to avoid conversation. Whence could this depression arise at the moment when it seemed that his desires had been fulfilled? I wished to know, and for this purpose I questioned him,

and at last succeeded in obtaining from him the avowal that it was caused by his son Robert.

Not that he was idle or dissolute ; but both Michel and his wife hoped that he would not leave them again. The presence of their only son was to cheer and introduce a new phase in their existence ; the mother counted the days, the father prepared everything for the reception of the dear companion of his labour, and, at the moment when they expected to be repaid for their many sacrifices, Robert had suddenly announced to them that he had taken a situation with a contractor at Versailles.

Remonstrances and entreaties had been alike useless ; he had replied to them by pointing out the necessity of his becoming acquainted with the mode of managing a large business, the facilities he would have there of pursuing his researches, and the prospects of applying them. Finally, when his mother had exhausted her reasons, and began to cry, he embraced her hastily, and went away to escape from any further entreaties.

His absence had already lasted a year, and there were no signs of his return. His parents saw him only once a month, and then only for a very short time.

"I have been punished where I hoped to be recompensed," said Michel to me ; "I desired an economical and hard-working son ; God has given me a son who is both ambitious and a miser ! I have always pleased myself with the thought that, once grown up, we should have him beside us to remind us of our youth and rejoice our hearts. I looked forward to hearing his cheerful voice as he worked beside me. A dream, sir, nothing but a dream !—no sooner had he got his feathers than the bird took flight, and no longer recognised his father or mother. No longer ago than yesterday, for example, he was to have spent the evening with us. But neither yesterday nor to-day has he made his appearance ! No doubt he has a design to finish, a bargain to conclude ; and his old parents are only thought of after everything else !

Imbecile that I was to sacrifice my tastes and money for twenty years to rear an ungrateful child! Oh! if I had my time over again! We pass a fourth of our life in rearing a plant, and when in our old age we think to gather the fruit, we find that there is nothing but husk!"

While speaking thus Michel's lips trembled, his eyes glared, and his voice was hoarse. I wished to offer him consolation, but I could think of nothing but what was common-place, so I held my tongue. He pretended that he wanted a tool, and left my room.

Poor father! Ah! I am familiar with those moments of temptation when, badly recompensed for the practice of virtue, one feels a species of regret at having followed its teachings! Who has not experienced this weakness in the hour of trial, and repeated, at least once, the mournful cry of Brutus: "*But if virtue is only a word*, what is there in life that is real and serious?"

No, I will not believe that the practice of virtue is vain! It does not always yield the pleasures we had hoped, but it brings others. Everything in the world has its logic and its result, virtue alone cannot be an exception to the common law. If it were damaging to the person who practises it, experience would have done it justice; whereas, on the contrary, experience has rendered it more general and more sacred. We accuse it of being an unfaithful debtor, because we expect an immediate payment from it evident to our senses. Life with us is like a fairy tale, in which each good action must be rewarded by a marvel. We do not feel disposed to accept as payment the repose of our conscience, self-content, or good reputation among men, treasures more precious than any other, and the full value of which we only estimate when we have lost them!

Presently Michel returned and resumed his work. His son had not arrived.

In relating to me his hopes and disappointments

his mind had become excited ; he kept returning to the same subject, and adding more and more to the list of his grievances. Taking me still further in his confidence, he told me of a business he had hoped, with his son's assistance, to have bought. The present owner had made his fortune, and after thirty years of active occupation, thought of retiring to end his days in one of the pretty little cottages in the environs of the city. It was true, Michel had not the eighty pounds demanded for the business, but then he might have induced M. Benoit to wait a little ; Robert's presence would have been a guarantee for its eventual payment, for he was known to have both knowledge and cleverness. His father had found among his drawings a design for a new kind of staircase, and rather suspected that he had engaged with the Versailles contractor chiefly to have an opportunity of constructing it. The youth was haunted by the genius of invention, which takes entire possession of a life, and buried in calculations, he had not time to listen to the dictates of his heart.

Michel told me all this with a mixture of pride and vexation. It was easy to see that he prided himself on the son he accused, and that this same pride rendered him more sensible of his desertion.

The joiner had just finished fixing the shelves, when a rapid step was heard ascending the stairs, and all of a sudden Robert entered my room and embraced his father with a warmth which rather surprised me after what I had just heard. His father tried to conceal the pleasure he felt at seeing him, while his mother stood behind him, her face radiant with satisfaction, and apparently scarcely able to prevent herself from speaking.

I welcomed Robert, who had saluted me with an air of polished ease on entering.

"I expected you yesterday," said Michel Arout, somewhat coldly.

"Pardon, father," replied the young workman ; "but

I had business at St. Germain. I didn't get back until very late, and the master kept me."

The joiner gave a side glance at his son, and resumed his mallet.

"It is true," he murmured, in a grumbling tone ; "when one is in other people's houses, it is necessary to do their bidding ; hence there are those who prefer to eat black bread with their own knives to feasting on partridges with a master's fork."

"And I am of the number," replied Robert, gaily ; "but, as the proverb says, '*to get at the peas you must first open the shells,*' it was necessary that I should first work in a large workshop."

"To carry out your new-fashioned plan of making staircases," interrupted his father, ironically.

"It is necessary to say now M. Raymond's plan, father," replied Robert, smiling.

"What for ?"

"Because I have sold him the invention."

The joiner turned round hastily.

"Sold it !" he exclaimed, with sparkling eyes.

"For the good reason, that I was not rich enough to give it away."

"It only wanted that !" he resumed, angrily ; "his good genius sends him an idea which might have made him talked of, and he sells it to a rich stupid who will get the honour."

"Well ! and what harm is there in that ?" asked Genevieve.

"What harm !" exclaimed the joiner, excitedly ; "you don't know anything about it, you are a woman ; but he—he knows well that a real workman will no more sell his invention than a soldier his cross. That is his glory ; therefore, he should have kept it for his own honour ! Ah ! thunder ! if I had ever made a discovery, I would rather have sold one of my eyes than put it up to auction ! A workman's invention is to him, look you, like a child ; he takes care of it, he caresses it, he pushes it along in the world, and they are only pitiful fellows who sell it."

Robert reddened slightly as he answered—

“You will think otherwise, father, when you know why I have sold my invention.”

“Yes, and you will thank him for it, too,” added Genevieve, who could no longer refrain from speaking.

“Never!” answered her husband.

“But, unfortunate,” she cried, “he has sold it on our account.”

The joiner regarded alternately his wife and son with a confused air. Then came the explanation.

The young man related how he had entered into negotiations with M. Benoit, who insisted on being paid one-half the purchase money before giving up possession of his business. It was in the hope of procuring this sum that he had entered the service of the contractor at Versailles; there he had been able to test his invention and to find a purchaser for it. Thanks to the money thus acquired, he had just finished the transaction with Benoit, and had brought his father the key of the new workshop.

This explanation of the young workman was given with so much modesty and simplicity that I was quite moved by it; Genevieve wept, Michel pressed his son in his arms, and in this long embrace seemed to ask pardon for having accused him.

Everything was now explained to Robert's credit. The departure from home, which his parents had taken for indifference, was in fact devotedness; he had neither obeyed the dictates of ambition or avarice, nor even the more noble passion of an inventive genius; his sole inspiration and object had been the happiness of his father and mother. The day of acknowledgment had arrived for him, and he had rendered sacrifice for sacrifice.

After these joyful explanations had been given, all three wished to leave, but the table was prepared; I had added three covers, and I detained them to breakfast.

The repast was prolonged, the cheer was not over good, but sentiment rendered it delicious. Never



before had I so well understood the ineffable attraction of family ties. What sweetness in those joys shared in common, in that community of interests, that association of existences which of several units forms only one being ! What is a man without these fireside affections which, like so many roots, give him stability, and enable him to absorb the juices of life ? Does not all strength and all real happiness spring from it ? Without family affections where would men learn to love, to associate themselves, to serve each other ? Is it not this union among a few which teaches us to associate in masses ? Such is the sanctity of the fireside that, to express our relations with the Deity, we are forced to borrow the expressions which have been invented to designate the ties of family. Men term themselves *sons of a Supreme Father* !

Let us guard these chains of domestic intimacy, nor loosen the band which binds the human sheaf to give up the individual ears to the caprices of chance ; let us rather enlarge this holy law, and deal with those outside our family as if they were members of it, so as, if possible, to realize the desire of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

## Duty.

THE nights were cold and long, and the sun no longer shone into my room and woke me early in the morning as heretofore. One morning, however, I was awoke by a ray of light which shone through my door and fell upon my eyes. It was impossible to escape it, so I got up and dressed myself, murmuring not a little at my new neighbour's working while I wanted to sleep ; for men don't consider that others have a right to study their own convenience even if it differs a little from that of their neighbours.

This little fit of ill-temper soon passed away, and I owned to myself that though my new neighbour was a much earlier riser than I cared to be, he was not the less an honest fellow, and bore his poverty, as very few are able to bear good fortune, with gaiety and moderation.

Nevertheless fate had sorely tried him. Père Chau-four was merely the ruin of a man. In place of one of his arms hung an empty sleeve fastened up to the shoulder ; his left leg came from the turner's shop, and he dragged his right leg after him with difficulty ; but above these relics arose a visage joyous and calm. In seeing his face radiant with a serene energy, in hearing his voice, the steadiness of which was accented, so to speak, with kindness, one felt that the soul rested entire in its half-destroyed envelope ; or, as he expressed it, "The fortress was somewhat damaged, but the garrison was well."

It occurred to me when I had dressed, that I owed him a kind of reparation for the secret ill-will I had

felt against him on first waking, consequently I determined on being the first to pay him a friendly visit.

He was quietly humming a tune as I entered his room, seated before a table on which a smoking lamp was placed, and which, though it was very cold, was the only fire in the room. He was busily engaged in fabricating coarse pasteboard, and received me with a joyous exclamation.

"Come in, neighbour, come in! I didn't know you were such an early riser, so I had put a mute on my voice for fear of waking you."

I felt this little mark of attention, and replied to him in a tone which opened his heart.

"My faith! you appear to me to have the air of a good Christian," said he, with soldierly cordiality, shaking me by the hand; "I don't like those men who look upon the passage before their door as a frontier, and treat their neighbours like Cossacks. When people swallow the same air, and speak the same jargon, they are not made to turn their backs on each other. . . . Sit down on that seat, neighbour . . . only take care! for it has got but three legs, and goodwill must stand as a substitute for the fourth."

"That is a valuable article which does not appear to be wanting here," I observed.

"Goodwill!" repeated Chaufour; "that is all I inherited from my mother, and I estimate that no son has received a better heritage. Also, in the battery they termed me Mr. Content."

"You have served?"

"In the Third Artillery during the Republic; and later in the Guard during all the commotion. I was at Jemappes and Waterloo; or, as one might say, at the baptism and interment of our glory!"

I looked at him with astonishment:

"And what age were you then at Jemappes?" I asked.

"Something like fifteen," he replied.

"And you had the idea of serving so young?"

"Well, not exactly—that is, I didn't think of it. I was working then at toy-making, without thinking that France could ask anything else of me than kites, cup and ball, and draughtsmen. But I had at Vincennes an old uncle whom I used to go and see from time to time ; an old Fontenoy man, in temperament something like myself, but a learned man, who was fit to be a marshal. Unfortunately, in his day, it appears that men without interest were not promoted by steam. My uncle, who had served in such a way that he would have been named a prince under *the other*, was at this time pensioned as a simple sub-lieutenant. But you should have seen him with his uniform, his cross of St. Louis, his wooden leg, his white moustaches and his handsome old face ! You would have said he was one of those old heroes in powdered hair who hang at Versailles. Each time I visited him he told me something which remained in my mind. But one day I found him unusually serious."

"Jerome," he said to me, "do you know what is passing on the frontier ?"

"No, lieutenant," I answered.

"Well," replied he, "the country is in danger !"

I didn't understand what he meant very clearly ; nevertheless, it made an impression upon me.

"Perhaps you have never thought what the word country means," he continued, laying his hand on my shoulder ; "it is all that which surrounds you, that which has fed and brought you up ; in short, everything you have loved."

\* \* \* \* \*

I trembled with emotion, and large tears filled my eyes.

"Ah ! I understand," I cried ; "it is that corner of the world to which it has pleased God to attach our bodies and souls."

"Exactly, Jerome ; therefore you understand, don't you, what we owe it ?"

"No doubt, to it we owe what we are and what we possess."

\* \* \* \* \*

This conversation worked so on my mind that I returned to him a day or two afterwards to tell him that I had enlisted, and that I was on the point of starting for the frontier. My brave uncle pressed me to his bosom, and I departed as proud as an ambassador on a mission.

"Now you know, my neighbour, how it was that I became a volunteer under the Republic before cutting my wisdom teeth."

This was said without emphasis, with the deliberate freedom of men who consider the accomplishment of a duty neither a merit nor a burden. When he became animated in speaking, it was on account of the deeds he narrated, not because he had been a sharer in them. This absence of self-assertion affected me very much, so much so that I prolonged my visit considerably, and, to obtain his entire confidence, I confided to him so much of my position and habits as made me an old acquaintance in his estimation.

I confessed to him how ill-tempered I had felt on being awake by the light of his lamp. He received my confession with the benevolent gaiety of a heart which looks at everything from the most favourable point of view. He did not say a word of the poverty which compelled him to work while I was still disposed to sleep, but struck his forehead and accused himself of stupidity, promising to stop up the crevices of the door to prevent it occurring again.

From this time an intimacy gradually sprang up between us, and I took the opportunity of asking him one day if he had lost both his limbs in the same battle.

"No, no," he replied; "the cannon took only my leg, it was the quarries at Clamart that devoured my arm."

And as I asked him for details he continued—

"It is as easy as good-day. After the great break-up

at Waterloo, I remained for three months in the hospital waiting for my wooden leg to grow. Once in a condition to get about, I came to Paris in the hope of finding some relative or friend ; but I was disappointed ; all were dead or had gone away. I should have been less a stranger at Vienna, Madrid, or Berlin. Nevertheless, my circumstances were none the more easy because I had a leg the less to feed, and my last sous were fast disappearing. It is true I had met my former captain, who remembered that I had got him out of a scuffle at Monteran by lending him my horse, and that he had offered me a place at his fire and candle. I knew he had married, a year before, a country-house and not a few farms ; so that I might have become perpetual brusher to a millionaire, which was not without its attractions. It only remained to be considered whether there was nothing that I was fitted for better. One evening I was thinking the matter over, and it seemed to me that I ought not to accept his offer. I reflected that there were many old soldiers incapable of work, whereas my arms and trunk were in a sound condition ; and, finally, I came to the conclusion that I should not be justified in laying up while I was still able to do a day's hard work. I next went to an ancient member of the artillery, who had returned to his home at Clamart and resumed his occupation of quarryman, and here I obtained employment. After a few months at this work I had become a pretty good hand. Unfortunately there were some among us who were too sensible to the charms of cognac ; so much so that one day one of them who was in a condition in which he was unable to distinguish his right hand from his left, took it into his head to strike a light close to a charged mine ; the mine exploded and sent a volley of stones among us, which killed three and knocked away my arm close to the shoulder."

"Thus you were again without a trade?"

"That is to say, it was necessary to change," he quietly replied. "The difficulty was to find one which

would be content with five fingers instead of ten ; I found it, however."

"Where was that?"

"Among the Paris street-sweepers."

"What ! you belonged——?"

"To the salubrity squad ; a little, neighbour—and that was not when I was worst off. The mass of the scavengers are not so badly composed as dirty, mind you. Among them were old actresses who had not known how to practise economy, merchants ruined on the Stock Exchange ; we even had a professor of humanities among us, who, for a glass of brandy, would recite you Latin or tragedies at your option. I don't mean to say that any of these could have competed for the Monthyon prize ;\* but misery makes us tolerant of vice, and good humour consoles misery. I was just as ragged and just as gay as any of them, only I endeavoured, even in the filth of the kennel, to act upon my conviction that no kind of work could disgrace a man which was useful to his fellow-creatures."

"Still you ended by quitting your new profession?"

"And for a sufficient reason, neighbour ; scavengers rarely have dry feet, and the damp at last caused the wounds on my remaining leg to break out afresh, so that I could no longer follow the squad. I was forced to lay down my arms. It is now two months since I laboured at the purification of Paris. At first I was a little stunned. Of my four members there only remained my right hand, and that had lost most of its strength. I tried a good many things, and at last hit upon pasteboard making, and here I am a maker of pasteboard for the cockades of the national guard ; it is not a very lucrative employment, but it is an art which is not above the reach of the meanest capacity. By getting up at four o'clock and working till eight, I earn sixty-five centimes (6½*d.*). All but three sous of this goes for food and lodging. I am thus richer than

\* A prize given for the reward and encouragement of the practice of virtue.—*Trans.*

the nation, for there is an equilibrium between my receipts and expenses, and I still continue to serve my country, since I economize her cockades."

The old man looked at me and smiled, as he uttered these words, and then resumed his work with increased activity.

I felt sad and pensive. Here, thought I, is another member of that sacred band who, in the combat of life, march always in the van for the example of the world. Each has his battle-cry—this one country, that family, and this other humanity; but all follow the same standard, that of duty; each acts under the same divine law, self-denial.



## A Lady in Search of a Husband.

CH. P. DE K.

MADemoiselle ADELINDE DESROSEAUX had forty-years, and what is commonly termed the remains of a fine woman; but as regards women in general new bagatelles are usually preferred to fine remains. Probably men want taste. Mademoiselle Adeline had seen herself, at twenty years of age, surrounded by homage, flatteries, and seductions of every kind; then it was who should succeed in pleasing her, in obtaining the favour of a look, a smile, or even the felicity of her hand in a *contredanse*. It rested with her then to choose among many aspirants who should be her husband; but she made no choice, or, as scandal said, she made too many; be this as it may, she remained unmarried.

At thirty Mademoiselle Adeline was still very pretty. She had lost her parents, and consequently enjoyed ample liberty. There was no lack of pretenders to her hand, and in coquetting with one and the other, she forgot to take a husband. Gradually these diminished in number, and at forty she found herself single, and without one lover remaining. She had passed the age of forty years without perceiving it, and was greatly surprised to find that others had been less blind. Mademoiselle Adeline still believed herself twenty; she knew that her heart was not less warm nor less loving than formerly. No one disputed the point with her, but they left her heart to waste its warmth alone. Adeline then said to herself, "I must have a husband, and I will have one, let him be young

or old, ugly or handsome, never mind which, provided I have somebody to love ; still I should prefer him to be young and amiable. I have two thousand francs a-year ; not much, it is true, but still it is something. *Allons*—now for desperate expedients ; since nobody among my acquaintances has the sense to marry me, I will advertise. After all, it is a means like any other ; they advertise hotels, chateaux, and lost puppies, and so I don't see why they should not advertise for husbands. Certainly I do not estimate myself at the value of a chateau, but, on the other hand, I am undoubtedly of more value than a King Charles spaniel. So let me write my advertisement and get it inserted." She set to work, and a few days afterwards the following appeared in the advertising sheet :—" *A single lady between two ages, of an agreeable personal appearance, possessing education, greatly accustomed to good society, and enjoying a permanent income of two thousand francs, desires to marry as speedily as possible. Address the person herself, between noon and four o'clock. Ask for Madlle. A.*" The advertisement concluded with her address ; she, nothing doubting that the advertisement would bring a crowd of applicants for her hand, dressed herself *en grande toilette*, and for some days never went out between the specified hours for fear she should miss a husband.

But, alas ! either the advertising sheet was no longer in vogue among the Parisians, or they had been so often deceived by false announcements, that they were unwilling to run the risk of being taken in again. At all events, whatever the reason, poor Adeline took nothing by her motion but the trouble and expense of making a grand toilette every day for four months ; not a solitary individual called to see the single lady who desired to marry herself promptly—not one !—not even the old gossips who, to employ their time, go everywhere where there is anything to be seen gratis.

Mademoiselle Adeline was vexed, grieved, and finally got angry ; she was on the point of weeping,

but reflecting that this would only spoil her eyes, she checked herself. She consulted her glass, she examined herself in it, and said—

“They don’t even come to see me, the imbeciles ! if they saw me I should be very soon married, I am sure ; for I am still very good-looking—I believe even better than when I was only twenty years of age—yes, in some respects I am decidedly improved.”

She dropped her head on her hands and reflected deeply. Suddenly she had an idea, one of those happy and unique ideas that the poet, the composer, and the painter wait for, often in vain, for weeks, and which they would do much better not to wait for at all, because inspiration is only a word invented by the idle as an excuse for wasting their time and doing nothing. Madlle. Adeline re-wrote her advertisement, and after the words, “Apply to the advertiser between noon and four o’clock,” she added the words, “To those who come without having had time to breakfast, Madlle. A. will feel great pleasure in offering something.” “With this addition,” she said to herself, “I am certain to have people come here. They will see me, and that is all I want.” So saying, she started off to the office with her new advertisement.

This novel expedient succeeded perfectly. The very day the advertisement appeared several men presented themselves to see the lady who desired to marry, and by a singular coincidence all of them confessed they had forgotten to breakfast before they came. Madlle. A. did the honours of her house with infinite grace ; to one she offered a pie, to another a chicken, and so forth. She chatted and made herself amiable. The gentlemen ate and drank ; they appeared enchanted with her ; there was not one of them who, on leaving her, but appeared disposed to marry her.

The next day the crowd of visitors was even greater ; and the following day they were still more numerous. Madlle. A. was obliged to keep open house ; all these gentlemen had a tremendous appetite. The pie and the chicken no longer sufficed ; she did not know

which way to turn ; her house had become converted into an eating-house ; and if it had continued, she would have compelled the eating-house keepers to reduce their charge for a dinner to twenty-five sous.

The poor lady began to perceive that her income would not long suffice for this kind of life. The numerous aspirants for her hand, who always came without having had time to breakfast, would very soon have eaten her out of house and home, and it is probable that there would then have been even less chance of her getting a husband. Besides, some of her visitors did not conduct themselves with propriety ; they came only to eat and drink, and they did the latter so copiously that the assistance of the porter was sometimes necessary to remove them. Mademoiselle began by suppressing the pie, next she suppressed the chicken, then the wine ; until finally she contented herself by offering a glass of water to those who desired to take something. The number of her visitors followed the same gradation as her eatables ; they diminished with the dishes, and they disappeared when they came to the glass of water.

"Men are monsters !" said Madlle. Adeline, when she found herself alone before her glass ; "they are unworthy creatures—carnivora—brutivora ! They came—they saw—they ate—they drank—and not one of them really thought of marrying me ! What conduct—in the nineteenth century, too—of which the enlightenment, the progress, and the civilization are so much vaunted ! Oh ! the traitors ! But never mind ! I have determined to marry, and a husband I will have. Let me find another expedient."

[The expedient which Madlle. Adeline hit upon, was one that could only have occurred to the mind of a French woman—equally audacious and original ; we can only indicate it by the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pensé*. But it was successful : a *milor* was attracted by it, and Madlle. Adeline got an English husband.—*Trans.*]

# The Tragedy of La Breteche.

H. DE BALZAC.

ON the banks of the Loire (said M. Bianchon), there stood an old ruinous-looking mansion in a garden overgrown with weeds. There was no other house near, and its appearance was one of utter desolation, and suggested the idea that it had been the scene of some great crime which had called down the vengeance of Heaven upon it. I frequently stopped to look at it, and imagined a host of crimes which had led to its present forlorn condition. One day I got over the hedge which enclosed the garden in order to examine the house more closely; and the same evening I had just finished my supper when the landlady came in, and, in a mysterious manner, informed me that M. Regnault wished to speak to me.

"Who is M. Regnault?" I asked; but she did not stay to reply, and directly I saw a tall thin man, dressed in black, enter the room. His clothes were very shabby, but he had a diamond pin stuck in his shirt-front, and gold earrings in his ears. "To whom have I the honour of speaking?" I demanded, as soon as he had taken his seat.

"I am M. Regnault, notary at Vendôme."

"I am delighted, sir, but I am not in a position to make a will, for certain reasons with which I am only too well acquainted."

●

"Pardon me ; that is not the object of my visit. I understand you are in the habit of visiting La Grande Bretèche."

This was the building to which I have referred, so I answered in the affirmative.

"One moment ! that constitutes a trespass. I am come in the name, and as the executor of the will of the late Countess of Merret, to request that you will discontinue your visits. You appear to be a gentleman of education, and, therefore, must be aware that it is an offence against the law to enter an enclosed property, and a hedge amounts to the same thing as a wall. As far as I am concerned, I should be willing enough to allow you to enter the house, but it is expressly forbidden by Madame de Merret's will, and I have never myself set foot in it since her death. Ah ! my dear sir, her will made a great sensation in Vendôme."

"Am I indiscreet, sir, in asking the reason why ?" I said.

"I will tell you as far as I may," he answered. "I had not long returned from Paris, where I had been pursuing my studies, and had just established myself in business in this place, when, one night, just as I was going to bed, I was sent for by the Countess de Merret. Her carriage was waiting at the door—but, before I go any further, I may tell you that her husband had died two or three months previously in Paris in a most miserable condition, for he had indulged in all kinds of excesses. The countess had abandoned La Grande Bretèche the very day that her husband left her, and it had been shut up closely from that time just as you see it now ; and it was even said that she had caused the whole of the furniture to be burnt before she left. For some months before he left his wife to go to Paris, the count and countess had lived together in a very singular manner ; he occupied the first floor, while she lived on the basement story ; and neither of them ever received a single person. Even

when she had removed to her new house she led the same secluded life, and was never seen even at church. On my way to see her I asked her maid if her mistress was very ill, and she replied that the countess had received the last consolations of religion, and was not expected to live through the night.

"I reached there about eleven o'clock at night. After traversing several large, dismal-looking rooms, I reached the countess's room. From the rumours in circulation respecting her I imagined that I was about to see a coquette. The room was so large, and so dimly-lighted by an old-fashioned argand lamp, which stood on the table, that I had some difficulty in distinguishing the countess in the midst of the enormous bed she occupied. She was propped up in a sitting position, her white hair serving as a kind of frame to a yellow face of such excessive thinness, that you would have supposed it two hands pressed together. Never could I have conceived it possible for a person to have wasted to such a degree and yet retain life. She was frightful to behold, for she had been so devoured by suffering, that she appeared nothing more than a phantom. The startling effect of her appearance was heightened by two large black eyes, deeply sunk in their orbits. Her lips were of a pale violet colour, and when she spoke to me I could scarcely perceive their movement, so low and feeble was her voice. Although habituated to spectacles of this kind, from the frequency with which I had been called in to draw up the wills of persons in their dying moments during my stay in Paris, I must say that the spectacle of weeping families, and the agonies and other things I saw never affected me to anything like the same degree as the first sight of this mute, solitary woman, who suffered alone in this huge, desolate-looking château. There was not the slightest sound, nor could I perceive the faintest movement of the bed-covering from her respiration. I regarded her with a stupefied air, and remained as if petrified by the spectacle. Presently her large eyes moved slightly; she made an

effort to lift her hand, which immediately fell down on the bed, and she uttered these words in a voice which was no more than the faintest whisper :—‘ I have been waiting for you impatiently.’ I began a reply, but she stopped me by a slight motion of her hand, and the attendant whispered in my ear, ‘ Don’t speak ; my lady is unable to bear the slightest sound.’ I sat down by the head of the bed ; the countess made a great effort, and succeeding in getting her hand under the bolster ; it rested there a moment ; then, by a violent effort, was withdrawn, holding a sealed paper. The exertion requisite to enable her to accomplish this overpowered her, and she had just time to say, as she left it in my hand, which I had stretched out to take it from her, ‘ I confide to you my testament’—when she suddenly seized a little crucifix lying on the bed, and pressed it to her lips, and with an exclamation of ‘ Ah ! my God !’ she ceased to exist. There was even an expression of joy in her eyes when she breathed her last. Certainly, she must have suffered greatly in her lifetime.

When the will was opened, it was found that she had left the whole of her property to the hospital at Vendôme, saving a few legacies. I was appointed her executor, and was instructed to leave La Grande Bretèche, the mansion which has excited your curiosity, unopened for fifty years from the day of her death. No repairs were to be made, and I was empowered, if necessary, to pay a man to watch over it. At the expiration of this term, supposing the conditions of her will had been strictly fulfilled, the house was to become the property of my heirs ; for, as you are no doubt aware, sir, the law forbids notaries to accept a legacy. Failing in the due discharge of the conditions imposed, the building was to go to the heir-at-law after the lapse of the said fifty years, subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions specified in a codicil annexed to the will, which was to remain unopened until that epoch arrived. The will has not been disputed, therefore——”



Without finishing the sentence, the notary regarded me with an air of triumph. I made him perfectly happy by paying him a compliment or two, and then I added—"Your narrative has made a profound impression on me. But I presume you must have made some conjectures respecting the contents of the codicil."

"Sir," he replied, with a comical reserve, "I should never think of permitting myself to judge the conduct of a person who honoured me with the gift of such a diamond as this," and he carried his hand to his shirt-front.

I soon, however, got him to tell me the opinions respecting it which were current among the gossips of both sexes, but they were so contradictory, that, in spite of the interest I felt in the subject, I could hardly prevent myself from falling asleep. I rose to show him out, and when he was on the staircase, he said—

"Ha! ha! many people in Vendôme would like to live forty-eight years longer if it were only to get at this secret. But, one moment!" Here he laid his finger on the side of his nose, as much as to say, Take particular notice of what I am about to observe. "To get at the secret it is not necessary that one should reach three-score years."

With this parting expression, which he no doubt thought very clever, he made his way down-stairs, and I was left to ruminate on the strange tale I had just heard, and to build up a romance upon it, which I did, *à la Radcliffe*. I was deep in my dream, when the door of the room opened gently, and my landlady entered the room.

"Well, sir," she began, "M. Regnault has no doubt told you his history of the Grande Bretèche."

"Yes, Mother Lepas."

"What did he tell you?"

I repeated as briefly as I could the notary's narrative. At each sentence my hostess bent her neck, with that expression in her countenance peculiar to the female innkeeper, which is a compound of the instinct of a

gendarme, the acuteness of the spy, and the cunning of the trader.

"My dear Madame Lepas," I said, at the termination of my recital, "you seem to know something more of the matter, eh? Else why have you taken the trouble to come up to my room?"

"Ah! faith of an honest woman, and as true as my name is Lepas——"

"There, don't swear, your eyes are large with a secret. You knew M. Merret. What sort of a man was he, dame?"

"M. de Merret, see you, was a handsome man, who was so long that you could not see the end of him! A worthy gentleman who came from Picardy. He paid cash for everything, to avoid the possibility of a dispute with any person. See you, he was passionate. All the ladies thought him very amiable."

"Because he was passionate?" I asked my hostess.

"Very likely," said she. "You will readily imagine that he must have had some special qualities to induce Madame de Merret to marry him, who, without detracting from others, was by far the richest and handsomest woman in the province of Vendôme. The bride was a real jewel of a woman. Ah, they were a handsome couple in their day!"

"Were they happy in their wedded life?"

"Hum! yes and no. Madame de Merret was a good woman, pleasant in her manners, who suffered a good deal at times from the hastiness of her husband; but though somewhat proud we liked him. Bah! it was in his position to be so. When one is noble, you see——"

"Still there must have been some catastrophe to cause their violent separation?"

"I didn't say that there had been any catastrophe. I don't know anything about it."

"Good; I am sure now that you know all about it."

"Well, sir, I will tell you everything. When I saw M. Regnault come up to your room, it struck me that

he was going to talk to you about the Grande Bretèche. That has given me the idea of consulting you on a point which has caused me a great deal of anxiety. I am sure that you are a gentleman capable of giving me good advice, and my conscience is greatly troubled by a matter which I do not feel disposed to confide to a confessor, considering what happened lately at Tours. A widow of the suburb of St. Pierre-des-Corps accused herself in confession of having killed her husband. She had, with all deference to you, salted him like a pig, put him in a cellar, and every morning she threw a small piece of him in the river ; she said he was travelling, and the fact is, he was journeying in detail under water. At last, there only remained the head. The priest went and told the public prosecutor, and she was put to death in consequence. When the judge asked her why she did not throw the head into the water after the remainder of the body, she answered, that she never could carry it, she found it too heavy. Well, sir, I am not in such a plight as the woman I speak of, as you will easily believe ; but what I want is the advice of a trustworthy man on a matter which happened to me. Hitherto, I have not dared to open my mind to the people about here, who, when gossiping is concerned, have tongues which move with steel springs. In fact, sir, no traveller has ever stayed so long in my inn as you have to whom I could tell the tale of the fifteen thousand francs——"

"My dear Madame Lepas !" I said, stopping her flow of words, "if your confidence is one which is of a nature to compromise me, nothing in the world would make me desire to be charged with it."

"Don't be alarmed," she said, interrupting me. "You will see."

This eagerness induced me to imagine that I was not the first to whom my good hostess had communicated the secret of which I was to be the sole depository, and I listened.

"Sir," said she, "when the emperor sent Spanish

prisoners here, I had to lodge, at the expense of the government, a young Spaniard, sent here on parole. Notwithstanding he was on parole, he had to go every morning to show himself to the chief of the police. He was a grandee. He had names ending in *os* and *dia*, something like Bagos de Feridia, but I am not quite sure; however, you can see it in my book. He was a handsome young man for a Spaniard, who, they say, are all ugly. He was only five feet two or three inches high, but he was well made, and had, oh! such pretty little hands, and such care as he took of them. He had as many brushes for his hands as a woman has for her whole toilette. He was dark-skinned and had a dark bright eye and black hair. He was very grave and silent, regular in his attendance at church, always kneeling in the same place, which happened to be within two or three yards of Madame de Merret's chapel. In the evening, he used to wander about the mountains, and I was rather alarmed at finding, soon after his arrival here, that he did not return until midnight; but I soon got used to that, and gave him the key so that he might let himself in. One day, a stableman, taking the horses to the river, saw the grandee swimming about in the middle of the stream, and he seemed rather annoyed when I cautioned him on his return to be careful of the weeds. At last, sir, one morning we could not find him in his room, and it was clear he had not been there all night. By dint of searching about the room I found a note in a drawer in which there were fifty Spanish gold coins, worth about 200*l.*, also some diamonds in a little box, which were valued at twice that sum. The note stated, that in the event of his not returning, we were to appropriate these things on condition of founding masses of thanksgiving for his escape and safety. At that time my husband was alive, and he went in search of the Spaniard; and here is a strange part of the tale. My husband, in examining the river, found his clothes buried under a large stone on the bank of the river, nearly op-

posite La Grande Bretèche. My husband was there so early that nobody saw him, and in accordance with the count's desire we burnt the clothes, and gave out that he had made his escape. The authorities sent officers in pursuit, but they were not successful in finding him. My husband thought the count had drowned himself, but I was of a different opinion. I believe that he had something to do in Madame de Merret's affair, seeing that Rosalie told me that the crucifix which madame valued so highly that she had it buried with her, was of ebony and silver, and I had noticed that the count had one like it when he first came here. Now, sir, is it not true that I have the right to enjoy the six hundred pounds without remorse?"

"Certainly ; but have you not questioned Rosalie?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir ; but that girl is like a wall. She knows something, but it is impossible to get her to talk."

After a little more conversation my hostess left me. My curiosity was now excited to the highest pitch. I felt sure that the Grande Bretèche had been the scene of some dreadful crime. Rosalie, who had been Madame de Merret's maid, was now the servant of the inn, and I fancied, from the expression of her face, that she possessed the secret of some fearful occurrence, and I determined I would get that secret from her.

\* \* \* \* \*

At last she consented to tell me the secret, and I will relate it as briefly as I can. The chamber occupied by Madame de Merret was on the ground floor. A little cabinet, about four feet square, which she used as a wardrobe, was at one end of the room. It was made in the thickness of the wall. Three months before the particular evening of which I am about to speak, the countess had been so much indisposed that the count had had a chamber prepared for him on the first-floor, which he occupied from that time. By one of

those chances impossible to foresee, he returned this evening two hours later than usual from the place where he used to go to read the papers and talk politics. He had lost forty francs, too, at billiards—an enormous sum in Vendôme, where everybody hoards. It had been his custom to ask Rosalie, when he came home, if her mistress had gone to bed, and on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he invariably went straight up to his room. This evening, on his return, he took it into his head to go and see his wife, partly to talk over his loss, and partly, perhaps, to get some consolation from her; for he had noticed at dinner that she was very nicely dressed, and he had observed this, as husbands do everything, a little late. Instead of calling Rosalie, who was busy in the kitchen with the cook and coachman, the count walked towards his wife's room, leaving his candle at the foot of the stairs. His step was easy to recognise as he moved along the corridor. At the moment he turned the handle of the door of his wife's room, he heard the door of the little cabinet shut, but as his wife was standing beside the fireplace, he took it for granted that it was Rosalie who had gone in; still a suspicion forced itself upon his mind; he looked attentively at his wife and perceived a confused expression in her eyes. When she spoke, her voice was slightly altered from its usual tone. "You have returned late to-night," said she. The count did not reply, for at that moment Rosalie came into the room. This was like a thunderbolt to him; he walked backwards and forwards from one end of the room to the other, with his arms folded across his chest.

'Have you heard bad news, or are you ill?' asked his wife, timidly, while Rosalie was assisting her to undress. He remained silent.

'You may go,' said the countess to her maid. She divined some misfortune was about to happen from her husband's aspect, and wished to be alone with him. When Rosalie had gone, the count stopped in front of his wife, and said to her calmly—

"Madame, there is somebody in your cabinet."

The countess looked at him quietly, and replied with great simplicity—

"No, sir."

This negative pierced the count's heart ; he did not believe it ; yet never had his wife appeared more pure and truthful than at that moment. He rose to open the door of the cabinet, when his wife caught him by the hand, regarded him with melancholy tenderness, and said, in a touching voice—

"If you do not find anybody there, reflect that all relations between us will be at an end."

The dignified attitude assumed by his wife impressed the count deeply.

"No, Josephine," said he, "I will not go. In either case we should be separated eternally. Listen ; I know the purity of your soul, and the holy life you lead ; you would not commit a mortal sin to save your life."

At these words the countess regarded her husband with a haggard eye.

"Stay, here is your crucifix," he added. "Swear before God that there is no person there ; I will believe you, and will never open that door."

The countess took the crucifix, and said—

"I swear it."

"Speak louder," said the husband, "and repeat : I swear before God that there is no person in that cabinet."

She repeated the phrase without hesitation.

"That is well," said the count, coldly.

After a moment's silence he took up the crucifix, which was of ebony, inlaid with silver, and finely chased, and said—

"I did not know you had anything so beautiful of this kind."

"I met with it at Duvivier's, who bought it of one of the Spanish prisoners who passed through Vendôme last year."

"Oh !" ejaculated the count, as he hung the crucifix on the nail, and rang the bell.

Rosalie answered it with remarkable quickness, and

as she entered the room, the count hastened to meet her, led her into one of the recesses of the windows, and said in a low tone—

"I know Gorenflot wishes to marry you, and that poverty alone prevents you from beginning house-keeping, and that you have told him that you will not marry him until he has found means to establish himself as a master mason. Well! go and find him, and tell him to come here with his tools. Take care you don't wake anybody else besides him in the house where he lives; his fortune shall exceed your desires. Mind, leave the house without gossiping, or else . . . ." He frowned. "Take my key," said he. He then stepped to the door, and shouted in a voice of thunder, "Jean!"

Jean, who was both his coachman and his confidential servant, made his appearance in the passage instantly.

"Go to bed all of you," said his master, at the same time making a sign for him to approach, and added in a low voice, "When they are all asleep—*asleep*, understand—you will come down quietly and let me know."

The count, who had never lost sight of his wife while he was giving his orders, returned and seated himself gently by her side, near the fire, and related to her his misfortunes in the billiard-room, and the subjects discussed in the reading-room. When Rosalie returned, she found the count and his wife chatting away amicably by the fire. It so happened that some repairs had just been made in the house, and a quantity of mortar had been left which inspired the idea the count was about to put in execution.

"Gorenflot is there, sir."

"Let him come in," said her master, aloud.

The countess paled slightly when she saw the mason.

"Gorenflot," said the count, "go and fetch as many bricks from the coach-house as will be sufficient to brick up the entrance to this cabinet. Then," he added, in a low voice, to the mason and Rosalie, "you will sleep here to-night, Gorenflot. But to-morrow morning you will have a passport to go to a town in a foreign country which I will tell you of. I will give



you 240*l.* for your journey. You will remain in that country ten years. You will go to Paris on your way, and there you will wait for me until I arrive. I will then give you a bond for a like sum, which will be paid on your observing the conditions of our agreement, and maintaining the most profound silence on what passes here this night. As for you, Rosalie, I will give you 400*l.* as a marriage portion on the day of your wedding, on condition that you marry Gorenflot, and preserve an absolute silence ; otherwise, no marriage portion."

"Rosalie," said the countess, "come and dress my hair."

The husband walked tranquilly to and fro, keeping a close watch on his wife, her maid, and the mason, but without showing any offensive suspicion. Gorenflot was obliged to make a noise about his work, and the countess took advantage of her husband being at the other end of the room to whisper to Rosalie: "An annuity of 40*l.* for you, child, if you will tell Gorenflot to leave an opening at the bottom." Then she said aloud, with great self-possession, "Go and help him!" The count and countess preserved an absolute silence all the time the mason was about his work. This was intentional on the part of the count, who did not wish to give his wife the opportunity of uttering words susceptible of a double construction. When the wall was built about halfway up, the mason took advantage of a moment when the count's back was towards him, to break one of the two panes of glass which formed the upper part of the door of the cabinet. For an instant the mason, the maid, and her mistress saw a swarthy face with eyes of fire at the opening, and the countess had just time to make a slight sign of the head, which seemed to say, 'Hope!' when the face disappeared.

About four o'clock in the morning the wall was finished. The mason was sent to bed under the guardianship of Jean, and the count remained with his wife. When they rose in the morning, he said to his wife—

"I must go to the police-office for a passport."

He put on his hat and moved towards the door; then, as if thinking of something, he turned back and took down the crucifix. His wife felt a thrill of joy. He is going to Duvivier's, thought she. As soon as her husband had gone out, the countess rang for Rosalie, and said in a terrible voice—

"The pickaxe! the pickaxe! I noticed how Gorenflot worked last night, and we shall have time to make a hole and stop it up again, so that it will not be seen."

Rosalie fetched a kind of crowbar, and her mistress began to demolish the wall with incredible strength and fury. She had already knocked out several bricks, and was in the act of giving a still more vigorous blow to the remainder, when she heard a step behind her; and stopping in the very act of striking, she looked round and saw her husband.

"Put the countess to bed," said he, coldly.

Foreseeing what would happen in his absence, he had laid a snare for his wife; he had merely written to the magistrate, and sent for Duvivier. The bricks had been restored to their places, and the apartment freed from the appearance of disorder when the jeweller arrived.

"Duvivier," said the count, "have you not bought some crucifixes of the Spaniards who passed this way?"

"No, sir."

"Good, I thank you," said he, exchanging a tiger-like glance with his wife. "Jean," added he, turning towards that confidential person, "you will bring me all the food I require to this room. The countess is not well, and I shall not leave her until she is quite recovered."

For twenty days did this cruel man remain near his wife. At first, when any noise was made in the cabinet by the dying man, and Josephine was about to plead for mercy on behalf of the unknown, he would stop her before she could utter more than a syllable by saying, "You have sworn on the cross that there is no person there."

## The Fairy of Lok Island.

FROM THE FRENCH OF EMILE SOUVESTRE.

ALL those who know the church lands know that it is one of the finest parts of the bishopric of Leon. There there have always been, besides forage and grain, orchards which yield apples sweeter than the honey of Sizun, and p~~ru~~ne trees all the flowers of which become fruit. As for the marriageable girls, they are all steady and good housewives—at least, so their friends say. In the good old times, when miracles were as common in Lower Brittany as baptisms and interments are now-a-days, there lived at Lanilis a young man named Honarn Poyamm, and a young girl named Bellah Postik. They were cousins, and according to the custom of the country, their mothers had brought them up together, because it was intended that they should one day marry, if it were the will of God. Therefore had they grown up loving each other very dearly; but their parents having died while they were still young, the two orphans, who had no heritage, were obliged to go to service, and entered the house of the same master. They might well have been happy, but lovers are like the sea, which is never at rest.

“If we only had wherewithal to buy a little cow and a skinny pig,” said Honarn, “I would rent a little bit of land of our master, the curé could marry us, and we would go and live together.”

“Yes,” replied Bellah, with a heavy sigh; “but we

live in such hard times ! cows and pigs went up in price at the last fair of Ploudalmazeau ; surely the Almighty does not any longer trouble himself how things go on in this world."

"I am afraid," resumed the young man, "that we shall have a long time to wait, for when I drink with friends at the public-house, it is never I who get the last drop out of the bottle."\*

"Very long indeed," replied the girl, "for I have not been able to hear the cuckoo sing."\*

Day after day these complaints were renewed, until Honarn at last lost all patience. He came one morning to look for Bellah, whom he found winnowing the grain in the open air, and told her he intended to go and seek his fortune. The young girl was greatly afflicted at this news, and did all in her power to restrain him, but he would not hearken to her.

"The birds," said he, "fly straight forward until they find a field of grain, the bees until they meet with flowers from which to make their honey; and shall a man have less sense than a flying animal. I, also, will seek everywhere until I find that which I want—that is, the price of a cow and a lean pig. If you love me, Bellah, you will no longer oppose a project which is intended to hasten our marriage."

Upon hearing this, the girl understood that she must yield, and though her heart turned against it, she said to Honarn—

"Go, in God's keeping, since it must be so ; but, first, I will share with you the best of that which my parents left me as a heritage."

Then she led the young man to her coffer and drew from it a little bell, a knife, and a staff.

"These three relics," said she, "have never been out of our family. Here, in the first place, is Saint Koledok's bell ; its sound can be heard at any distance,

\* It is a common saying in Brittany that he who finishes the bottle will be married within the year. The same is also said of girls who hear the cuckoo sing.

and warns our friends when we are in danger. The knife belonged to Saint Corentin, and everything it touches is safe from the enchantments of magicians or of the demon. Finally, the staff is that which was borne by Saint Vouga, and will carry you wherever you wish to go. I give you the knife to defend you from deeds of malice, the bell to warn me when you are in danger, and I keep the staff to enable me to rejoin you when you require my assistance."

Honarn thanked his betrothed, he wept a little with her, as is right when lovers separate, and departed in the direction of the mountains. But it was in those days as it is in these, and in all the villages through which he passed he was pursued by beggars, who, because his clothes were whole, took him for a lord.

"By my faith," thought Honarn, "I see more chance of getting rid of a fortune than of making one in this country; let us try a little further."

On he went until he reached the coast and arrived at Pontaven, a pretty little town on the banks of a river which ran between rows of poplars. As he sat there at an inn door, he heard two men, as they were loading their mules, talking of the Fairy of Lok Island. Honarn asked who they were talking about, and they told him that it was a fairy who dwelt in the lake, and who was richer than all the kings of the earth together. Many people had gone to her island to seize her riches, but they had never returned.

Upon hearing this, Honarn turned it over in his mind for an instant, and then said that he would try his fortune. The muleteers tried all they could to dissuade him from the enterprise, but in vain. They even called the people round them to restrain him by force from running upon his own destruction. He thanked them for the interest they took in him, and declared himself ready to abandon his project if they would only make a collection for his benefit which would enable him to buy a little cow and pig; but the muleteers and the others, on hearing this, withdrew, saying that he was a pig-headed fellow, and it was im-

possible to restrain him from going. Therefore, Honarn went down to the shore and engaged a boatman to row him to Lok Island. In the middle of the island he found a small lake, the banks of which were covered with verdure and flowers. As he was walking round it, his attention was attracted to a small boat, in form like a swan, sleeping with its head under its wing. This was so novel a sight to the young man that he stepped into the boat to examine it more closely, but he had scarcely done so when the swan seemed to wake up, its head came from under its wing, and with its large feet it cut through the water and soon was far from the bank. Honarn cried out in alarm, and thought of plunging into the water and swimming ashore, but, as if divining his intention, the swan suddenly dived and carried him down with him. He could not cry out without swallowing some of the water, so he was forced to hold his tongue, and at last he arrived at the fairy's home. It was a palace built of shells, which surpassed all that the mind could conceive of beauty. The entrance was by a crystal staircase, so made that each step, as the foot was placed upon it, gave out musical sounds like the singing of birds in the woods. This led to immense gardens, where grew forests of marine plants, and the slopes of which were covered with green algæ, on which grew diamonds instead of flowers.

The fairy was reclining on a golden bed. She was dressed in a sea-green robe, fine and supple as a wave; her black hair, in which pieces of coral were entwined, reached to her feet, her skin was white as ivory, and the rosy bloom on her cheek could only be compared to the inside of a sea-shell.

Honarn stopped short, overwhelmed with surprise at the sight of a creature so beautiful; but the fairy rose and moved towards him with a motion as graceful as the white-crested wave. Her smile was sweet, as, with a gentle movement of her hand, she signed to him to advance.

"Welcome," said she; "there is always room here for

strangers ;” and then she added, “ Who are you, where do you come from, and what do you seek ?”

“ I am named Honarn, I come from Lanilis, and I seek the means of buying a cow and a pig.”

“ Very good ; come this way, and don’t trouble yourself any further ; you shall have all you desire.”

She led him into a room, the floor of which was covered with pearls, where she gave him eight different kinds of wine in eight goblets of chased silver. Honarn drank of the eight wines, and found them so good that he repeated the process, and at each drink the fairy seemed more and more beautiful.

The fairy encouraged him to continue, telling him that he need not be afraid of ruining her, since the lake through which he had descended communicated with the sea, and to it all the riches which went down in wrecks was brought by a magic current.

“ By my salvation,” exclaimed Honarn, whom the wine had rendered gay, “ I am no longer astonished that the people along the coast speak evil of you ; such rich persons always excite jealousy in the minds of some ; for my part, I would not ask more than the half of your fortune.”

“ You may have it if you like, Honarn,” said the fairy.

“ How so ?” he asked.

“ I am the widow of my late husband, the Korandon,” she answered ; “ and if you find me to your taste, I will become your wife.”

The young man was overwhelmed with surprise at what he had just heard. He to marry such a lovely fairy, whose palace was so magnificent, and who had eight different kinds of wine which she suffered him to drink at discretion. . . . It was true he had promised to marry Bellah ; but men forget such promises so very easily ; they are in this respect like women. Therefore he politely said to the fairy that she was not made to be refused, and that he would be rejoiced and honoured to become her husband. Whereupon the fairy said

she would at once prepare the feast of espousals. She covered the table with everything he knew to be good, and a great many things he knew nothing at all about; then she went to a fish-pond in the garden, and Honarn followed her. When she reached it she called out—

“Hi! attorney, miller, tailor, singer!” and so forth, and at each call a fish was seen to enter a little net made of steel wire which she held. When this was filled, she took the fish and threw them into a golden frying-pan. In the midst of the hissing sound of the frying, Honarn fancied he could hear tiny voices whispering.

“Who is that whispering under the golden frying-pan, fairy?”

“It is the crackling of the wood,” she answered, stirring the fire.

The next instant the tiny voices again began to murmur.

“Who is that murmuring, fairy?” he asked.

“It is the bubbling of the fat,” she replied, giving the little fishes a turn.

Soon the tiny voices began to cry louder.

“Who is that crying out, fairy?” again the young man asked.

But the fairy sang so loud that he could no longer hear anything. What had passed, however, had caused him to reflect, and as he began to get frightened he also began to feel remorse.

“Jesu Maria!” he said to himself, “is it actually possible that I can so soon have forgotten Bellah for a fairy who must necessarily be a daughter of the demon? With that woman there I should never be able to say my prayers of an evening, and I should be as certain of going to hell when I died as a pig-doctor.”

While he was considering the matter to himself thus, the fairy had placed the nicely fried fish on the table; she pressed him to eat, telling him that she would go and fetch him a dozen new sorts of wine.

Honarn drew out the knife Bellah had given him



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SECRET

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SECRET

*[Faint, illegible markings]*

THE ROCK  
MOUNTAIN

... in writing  
... and reported

the charm : "In the name of Saint Vouga, staff of the apple-tree, be my conductor through air or water, or wherever I may desire to go." The staff changed into a red ass, saddled and bridled, with a ribbon on each ear, and a blue plume on the forehead.

Bellah mounted him without hesitation. He started first at a walk, then he got to a trot, then to a gallop, and at last he went so fast that the eyes of the young girl could not distinguish objects. Presently the animal came to a stop, and Bellah saw that they were at the foot of the rock known as the *Stag's Leap*. She repeated the charm with a slight variation, and two wings immediately grew from the sides of the ass, who bore her to the top of the rock.

On the summit of this rock was a nest made of potter's earth, lined with dried moss, on which was crouching a little black and wrinkled Korandon,\* who began to call out when he saw her,

"Here is the girl who is to save me."

"Save thee!" said Bellah; "who art thou, then, my little man?"

"I am Jeannik, the husband of the Fairy of Lok Island, and it was she who sent me here."

"But what art thou doing in that nest?"

"I am sitting on six stone eggs, and I shall not have my liberty until they are hatched."

Bellah could not help laughing.

"Poor, dear chicken," she cried; "and how shall I be able to deliver thee?"

"By freeing Honarn, who is in the power of the fairy."

"Ah! tell me how that is to be done," exclaimed the orphan; "and if it should be to make a pilgrimage through all four bishoprics on my knees I am ready to begin at once."

"Very good; then two things are necessary: in the first place, to present thyself before the fairy in the

\* A kind of Robin Goodfellow.

guise of a young man, then to get possession of the steel net she wears at her waistband, and shut her up in it until the day of judgment."

"And where shall I find men's clothes to fit me, my darling little Korandon?"

"Thou shalt soon see."

At these words the little dwarf pulled out four of his red hairs, and blew upon them, and muttered something in a low voice, and the four hairs became four tailors, having the implements necessary to the practice of their vocation. They seated themselves round the nest with their legs crossed after the manner of tailors, and began to prepare a dress for Bellah.

One of them held a cabbage in his hand, and with a leaf torn from this they made a fine coat, with a second leaf they made a waistcoat, and two more served for the capacious breeches which was the fashion of Leon. Finally, the heart served to make a hat, and the stalk was converted into a pair of shoes. When Bellah had dressed herself in these, you would have said she was a gentleman dressed in green velvet turned up with white satin.

She thanked the Korandon, who gave her some further instructions; then her curious bird transported her to Lok Island, where she turned him again into a staff, and with it in her hand she entered the boat in the form of a swan, which conducted her to the abode of the fairy.

At the sight of the young native of Leon the fairy seemed ravished.

"By my cousin Satan," she said to herself, "this is the best-looking man who has been to visit me; and I believe I shall love him for three times three days."

She showed great friendliness for Bellah, and called her all sorts of endearing names. At breakfast Bellah found on the table Saint Corentin's knife, which Honarn had left behind in his fright, and of this she took possession in case she might want it, and then followed the fairy into the garden. The latter showed

her all its beauties, the diamond flowers, the fountains which threw out water perfumed with lavender, and especially the fishpond, in which swam fishes of all colours. Bellah was so delighted with these, that she sat down at the edge of the water to look at them the better.

The fairy took advantage of her delight to ask her if she would not be glad to remain always in her company ; to which Bellah replied that she desired nothing better.

"Thus thou consentest to marry me at once?"

"Yes!" answered Bellah; "on condition that I may fish up one of these beautiful fish with the net you have at your waist?"

The fairy, who was without suspicion, took this condition to be a caprice of a young man, and gave him the net, saying with a smile—

"Let us see, handsome fisherman, what thou wilt take."

"I will take the devil," cried Bellah; and straight-way she threw the net over the head of the fairy. "In the name of the Saviour of mankind, accursed sorceress, become in body what thou art in soul."

The fairy had only time to utter a cry, which died away in a stifled murmur, for the desire of the girl was accomplished; the beautiful fairy had become the hideous queen of the toads.

Bellah closed the net quickly, and ran and threw it in a well, on which she rolled a stone, which she sealed with the sign of the cross, in order that it might not be raised until the day when all tombs will be opened—the day of judgment.

When she had done this, she hastened back to the fishpond; but the fishes had already left it, and were coming to meet her like a procession of monks; and when they saw her, they cried as loudly as their little voices would allow them—

"Here is our lord and master! he who has delivered us from the net and the golden frying-pan."

Bellah drew out Saint Corentin's knife ; but just as she was about to touch them with it, she caught sight of a little green frog, who had a bell hanging round his neck, and who seemed to be sobbing bitterly and looked pitifully at her.

"Is it thou?—is it thou, my little Honarn?"

"It is I," replied the little frog ; whereupon Bellah touched him with the magic knife, and he resumed his original form, and they embraced each other, half crying at the thought of the past, and half laughing at the thought of the future.

Then she delivered the others from their enchantments ; and just as she had finished, the little Korandon arrived from the Stag's Rock, in a car drawn by six large flies, which he had hatched from the stones. He thanked her very warmly for having broken the spell which chained him to the rock ; and to show his gratitude, he took her and her betrothed to the place where the fairy kept her treasures, and they filled every part of their clothes with precious stones ; and having converted the staff into an aerial carriage, they all took their places in it, and were carried to Lanilis, where Honarn bought all the land in the parish, and established the people whom Bellah had rescued from captivity upon it as farmers.

## The Beginning of a Career.

CONDENSED FROM THE FRENCH OF H. DE BALZAC.

IN 1820, the places famed for their sites, and termed *environs of Paris*, did not all of them possess a regular service of public conveyances. That between Paris and the Isle-Adam was in the hands of a man named Pierrotin and a competitor, with whom, however, he lived on very good terms. This conveyance in the days when the narrative opens, used to start from the Lion d'Argent, a hotel at the corner of the *Rue d'Enghien* at Paris.

Although the departures for the Isle-Adam ought to have taken place at the time fixed, Pierrotin was in the habit of granting himself an indulgence in this respect, which, if it were gratifying to his country customers, was by no means so to those who were accustomed to the regularity of large public establishments. The afternoon departure, which was announced for four o'clock, was always delayed until half-past four, and that of the morning, which was fixed for eight o'clock, often did not take place until nine. This system was, moreover, excessively elastic. In summer, which is the golden season for proprietors of conveyances, the vehicle started the moment the regular customers had taken their seats, and the unlucky bird-of-passage who happened to be late, lost the money he had paid on the previous evening when he booked his place. This was frequently an advantage to Pierrotin,

who was able to take up a passenger in his place, and thus pocket the price of two places for one.

Pierrotin was a man about forty years of age, and a *paterfamilias*. After serving his time in the cavalry, he had succeeded his father in his present occupation, and was distinguished for his intelligence in the conduct of his business. Pierrotin's red, weather-beaten face had an expression of promptitude and decision, and he had that facility of expressing himself which a man acquires by dint of travelling through different countries. From the habit of shouting at his horses his voice was rough, but he knew how to soften it when speaking to a *bourgeois*. His military experience had left a great respect for social distinctions, but he readily became familiar with the small tradesmen, and had a particular respect for women whatever class they belonged to. Nevertheless, from habit he had come to regard travellers as parcels which walked about, and consequently required less care than the others entrusted to him.

One Saturday morning, in the early days of the autumn of 1822, Pierrotin was seated on one of the stones which protected the entrance to the court-yard of the hotel of the Lion d'Argent, and standing near him were some of the stablemen and the men connected with the parcels-office.

"Shall I put-to, master?" asked one of the stablemen.

"It is a quarter-past eight o'clock, and yet I don't see any travellers," answered Pierrotin; "where can they have hidden themselves? Put-to the horses all the same. There are no parcels either, and I have only four passengers booked. A pleasant prospect for a Saturday. That is always the case when one is especially in want of money."

"And if you got more passengers, where would you put them? you have only this conveyance," said the chief of the parcels-department.

"I have got a splendid carriage building, which will be ready for use on Sunday. It makes a flaming ap-

pearance, all red and gold. I have got a match for the big horse, and I shall put the little mare in front, and make a unicorn team. Here, put-to," he called out; "I can see a lady and a youth yonder, who have got parcels under their arms. They are looking for the Silver Lion. Stay, I fancy I recognise the lady as a customer."

"You have often finished your journey with a full vehicle after having started empty," said his man.

"But there are no parcels," answered Pierrotin. "What luck!"

This brief conversation awoke painful reflections in Pierrotin's mind. In his desire to eclipse his competitor and make a figure on the road, he had ordered a grand vehicle of Farry, Breilanaud, and Co., the coachmakers, who had introduced the square English springs in place of those shaped like a swan's neck, and other old French inventions. Having no desire to have a vehicle left on their hands for which it would be difficult to find a purchaser, this clever firm would not begin making it until Pierrotin had paid them a deposit of two thousand francs. To satisfy this just requirement Pierrotin had exhausted the whole of his resources and his credit, and before he could take possession of this superb diligence, it was necessary that he should pay the remainder of the price, which was one thousand francs more; and for want of having this sum Pierrotin stood a chance of losing the deposit he had already paid; he was therefore in great tribulation. Suddenly an idea flashed across his mind. "Suppose I ask M. Moreau to advance the money on a bill of six months' date; he is such a good sort of a man that he might do it."

At this moment a servant arrived with a portmanteau and asked, "Are you Pierrotin?"

"After?" said Pierrotin.

"If you can wait a quarter of an hour, you can take my master; if not, I will take his portmanteau back, and he will go in a postchaise."



"I will wait two, three quarters of an hour, and a fraction, if needful, my boy," said Pierrotin, eyeing the portmanteau, which was closed with a lock on which was engraved a coat-of-arms.

"Very well," said the man, handing him the portmanteau.

"Here," said he to his man, "get some hay to lay this upon, that it may not be scratched. There is no name upon it," he added.

"That is Monseigneur's coat-of-arms."

"Monseigneur! Come and take a glass with me," he said, winking at the servant. "Here, waiter! two glasses of absinthe! Who is your master, and where is he going?" asked Pierrotin, clinking his glass against the servant's; "I have never seen you before."

"There is good reason for that. My master does not travel your road but once a year, and when he goes it is in his own carriage. He likes the valley of the Orge, where he has one of the most beautiful parks to be found in the neighbourhood of Paris; a real Versailles—a family property. He takes his title from it. Don't you know M. Moreau?"

"The steward of Presles?" said Pierrotin.

"Well, the count is going to stay a couple of days there."

"Ah! I am going to take the Count de Serisy."

"Yes, my boy, nobody less than he. But, attention! If you have people belonging to that part in your vehicle, don't name the count; he wishes to travel incognito, and desired me to tell you so, and to promise you a good fee."

"Ah! Has this secret journey by chance anything to do with Père Leger's affair which he is about to conclude? I mean the farmer at Moulineaux."

"I can't say," answered the servant. "But there is something wrong. I ordered the carriage to be ready this morning at seven o'clock; but his lordship altered his mind. Augustine, his valet, told me that it was owing to a visit he had received from a lady."

"Has anything been told him respecting M. Moreau, the best and most honest of men—the king of men? He might have made a great deal more money than he has if he had liked."

"He was wrong, then, not to have done so," said the footman, sententiously.

"The Count de Serisy, then, is going to live at Presles since he has furnished it so sumptuously?" said Pierrotin, interrogatively, after a pause. "Is it true that he has already spent two hundred thousand francs upon it?"

"If either you or I had as much as he has spent there above that sum, we might retire," answered the servant, mysteriously.

"A fine fellow, M. Moreau!" resumed Pierrotin, who was still thinking of asking him to lend him the thousand francs; "a man who gives plenty of work, who does not beat down the price, and who gets all that can be got out of the property, and for his master, too! He often comes to Paris with me, and always gives a good fee, and has always a heap of commissions for me. What with him and madame my bill for parcels is generally fifty francs a month. If madame does make a little pretence of being somebody, she is very fond of her children, and when I fetch them from school she always makes me a present of a five-franc piece. Oh! whenever I have anybody going to visit them, I always drive right up to their gate, though it is a little out of my way."

"They say that M. Moreau hadn't a thousand francs in the world when the count appointed him his agent at Presles," said the footman.

"But since 1806, in seventeen years, he must have made something."

"That's true," answered the other, nodding his head significantly. "Masters are very ridiculous, and I hope for Moreau's sake that he has well buttered his bread."

"I have often taken parcels to your hotel in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, but I never happened to see either the count or her ladyship."

"The count is a good man," said the footman, confidentially; "but if he desires you to keep his name a secret, there must be something wrong; that is our opinion at the hotel, else why would he, a peer of France, travel in your conveyance instead of in his own carriage, or at all events in a postchaise?"

"A postchaise would cost him forty francs," said Pierrotin, "and peer of France and bourgeois are alike thoughtful of their coins. If this journey concerns M. Moreau, it will vex me if any misfortune happens to him. Are there no means of letting him know?"

"Bah! the count likes him very much," said the servant. "But if you would like me to give you a word of good advice, every one for himself. Do what you are asked, the more that it won't do to play tricks with his lordship. He is generous, and if you oblige him as much as that," said the footman, touching one of his finger-nails, "he returns you as much as that," stretching out his arm to its full length.

This judicious remark, and especially the gesture, coming from a man in so lofty a position as the footman of the Count de Serisy, cooled the zeal of Pierrotin in behalf of the land-steward at Presles.

"Adieu, M. Pierrotin," said the servant.

A glance at the antecedents of the Count de Serisy and his agent is here necessary to thoroughly comprehend the little drama which was about to be enacted in Pierrotin's conveyance.

The father of the count was president of a parliament before the Revolution. The count himself had, while still young, attained considerable reputation, which was further increased by the services which he rendered to the State under Napoleon, and subsequently under his successor, Louis XVIII. On the return of Napoleon from Elba, he refused to join him, consequently, after the "Hundred Days," when Louis had resumed his throne, the Count de Serisy was in high favour, and was entrusted with the management of

highly important State affairs; and, in short, was an exceedingly influential personage, and in return for his arduous labours had received the Orders of nearly every European Court. He had married in 1806, at a time when he had reached his fortieth year, the widow of a general who had served under the Empire, a young woman of twenty. Passionately devoted to his wife, he did his utmost to protect her from the censure of the world, and to his influence and affection she owed the maintenance of her position in society. The chief barrier between the count and his wife arose from an affection of the skin, which he had brought upon himself by excessive mental labour, which compelled him to live separate from his wife, and thus left her without control.

Let us now explain the reason of the sudden and mysterious journey of the statesman.

A rich farmer of Beaumont sur Oise, named Leger, cultivated a farm which formed a series of wedges in the count's estate, and which rather damaged its magnificent proportions. This farm belonged to a man named Margueron. The lease granted to Leger in 1799, at a time when the progress since made by agriculture could not be foreseen, was about to expire, and the proprietor refused to renew it. For a long time past the count, wishing to put an end to the disputes which arose from the manner in which the property was mixed up with his own, had entertained the hope that Margueron would sell him this farm, as the sole ambition of the latter was to get his son appointed Receiver-General of the Finances at Beaumont. Moreau had pointed out to the count that he would have a dangerous competitor in Leger, who was well aware of the price which he might be able to get from the count by selling him the farm in detail. Desirous of bringing the affair to a speedy termination of some kind, the count had, two days previously, sent for his solicitors, to consult with them respecting the affair. They threw doubts on the good faith of his agent,

Moreau, respecting whom they had received an anonymous letter, but the count defended him on the ground of his having served him faithfully for seventeen years.

"Well, well," said one of them, Derville, "I advise your lordship to go yourself to Presles, and invite Margueron to dinner. My colleague, Crottat, will send his managing clerk with a deed of sale ready drawn up, and you had better take an order on the bank for a portion of the price, and do not forget the nomination of his son to the post he aspires after."

We must now say something of the antecedents of the agent, M. Moreau.

During the Revolution his father held a legal appointment at Versailles, and had thus been the means of saving the life and property of the count and his father. This Moreau had been attached to Danton's party; Robespierre, implacable in his hatred, got hold of him, and caused him to perish on the scaffold. His son, who inherited the feelings and political principles of his father, mixed himself up in one of the conspiracies against the First Consul on his advent to power, and was condemned to death. The Count de Serisy, desirous of acquitting the debt of gratitude he owed the father, procured Moreau's escape, and afterwards his pardon. He appointed him his private secretary; but Moreau having fallen in love with one of the countess's maids, married her, and to escape from the unpleasantness which this false step might have brought upon him, he asked the count to entrust him with the management of his estate at Presles. As Moreau was intelligent, and had studied law in his father's office in his youth, the count gave him the appointment. His position here was by no means a bad one. The count paid him a salary of three thousand francs a year, gave him an excellent house to live in, hay for a couple of horses, and many other privileges. During the first eight years the agent managed the estate conscientiously. The count was struck with the improvements he made and his fidelity, and rewarded him with

frequent presents. But when Moreau found himself established so completely at his ease, and with the claims of an increasing family upon his funds, he began to draw upon the profits of the estate. Thus, when a wood-merchant offered him twenty-five thousand francs to conclude a lease for twelve years, Moreau reasoned that he was father of a family, was entitled to no retiring pension, that he was fairly entitled to it after managing the estate for ten years; then, that being lawful possessor of sixty-five thousand francs, if he accepted this twenty-five thousand, he might buy a farm in Champagne. Having decided on accepting this bribe, the stirring political events of the period prevented anybody from noticing this investment, which was made in his wife's maiden name. No sooner had the agent tasted the sweets of ownership, than, though maintaining outwardly the strictest probity, he took every opportunity of adding to his property. Nevertheless, it is only just to him to say, that if he seized every chance of enriching himself, in the eye of the law he remained an honest man. According to the jurisprudence of the least thievish of Paris cooks, he only shared with his master the fruits of his cleverness. The manner in which he managed the property was so good that it was a common saying among the people who resided near it, "that in M. Moreau the Count de Serisy had a second self." By investing his money in the funds, Moreau was able to make the most of it, and at the same time to keep up the appearance of being a poor man; while, at the time when our story opens, he actually had, in one way or another, property to the value of 280,000 francs.

The only motive Leger had in desiring to buy the farm was to sell it at an advanced price to the count; and in order to succeed in his design, he managed to meet Moreau one day in the fields, and convinced him that in buying the farm of him at a certain price, he would still make a good investment of the count's money, and at the same time benefit himself to the

extent of forty thousand francs. Moreau was not deaf to this reasoning, and in the evening he said to his wife, "If I get fifty thousand francs by this Moulineaux business—for the count will certainly make me a present of ten thousand—we will retire to Isle-Adam, and live in that pretty house which the Prince de Conti built for a lady. We shall then be quite close to our property in Champagne, and by making some additions to it, we shall derive an income of ten thousand francs from that, and six thousand from our money in the funds."

"But why not also apply for the post of *juge de paix* at Isle-Adam? that would bring us in another fifteen hundred francs a year, besides the influence it would give us," said his wife.

"Oh! I have thought of all that."

Just at this time Moreau received a letter from the count, desiring him to invite the owner of the coveted farm, Margueron, to dine at Presles on the following Saturday, in order that the affair might be settled. In reply to this, Moreau sent a letter to the count desiring him not to give himself any trouble in the matter, but to trust to his zeal. It was not the intention of Margueron to sell it altogether, but to divide it into portions, and it would be necessary to induce him to abandon this idea, and perhaps to buy the land under a feigned name. This letter reached Paris too late to be given to the count the same night; it was therefore laid upon his writing-table.

Everybody has his enemies. Now the agent and his wife had greatly offended a retired officer named Reybert, and his wife, who resided in the town. These two determined to watch Moreau's proceedings, and were not long in discovering his malpractices, and the present moment seemed a favourable one for getting Moreau dismissed from his post, and of succeeding him in it; accordingly, on the very evening that the agent despatched this letter, Reybert sent his wife to Paris to get an interview with the count, and reveal what

they had discovered. Early the next morning she obtained an interview, and said to the count—

“Monseigneur, my husband and I are incapable of writing anonymous letters. I am Madame Reybert, my husband is a retired officer, who lives on his pension at Presles. He has watched the conduct of your agent for some time past with the view of getting him dismissed, in return for the annoyances he has caused us, and in the hope of getting his place. You see I am frank. They are tricking you in the matter of the farm at Moulineaux, and have arranged a plan by means of which they will get a hundred thousand francs out of you, which they propose to divide between them. You ordered Moreau to invite Margueron to dinner, and you reckon on going to Presles to-morrow ; but you will hear that Margueron will be too ill to come ; and Leger counts so certainly on having the farm, that he has come to Paris to get the money. If we have enlightened you, if you desire to have an honest agent, employ my husband, who will serve you as honourably as he served the State. Your present agent has got 250,000 francs, and will not want pity.”

The count thanked the lady coldly, for he could not help despising an informer ; but in his heart he entertained doubts of his agent's integrity, especially when he reflected on what Derville had said on the previous evening. At this moment Moreau's letter caught his eye ; he opened it, and in the respectful reproach it implied for his desiring to treat in the matter himself, the count divined the truth. “Corruption has come with riches as usual,” thought the count. He then questioned madame less to obtain details than to have an opportunity of observing her ; and then he wrote to his lawyer, requesting him to come himself to Presles to dinner instead of sending his managing clerk. After some further conversation with Madame Reybert relative to her and her husband's antecedents, he dismissed her with the promise that he would see Captain Reybert at Presles, where he proposed to go



secretly. . . . Thus the news of the count's intended journey in his conveyance did not alarm the proprietor of it without reason for one of his best customers.

On leaving the café, Pierrotin perceived the woman and youth who he had imagined were looking for his vehicle, standing at the door of the Silver Lion. The woman was dressed in clothes which had once been good, but were now worn and shabby. From her appearance she must once have been beautiful; but care, more than her forty years, had deprived her of her attractions. Her son—for anybody could perceive at a glance that he was her son—was about nineteen years of age. His dress was not less poor and shabby than his mother's. The cuffs of his coat were high up on his arm, showing that he had grown considerably since he first had it. The pantaloons bore signs of the mother's handiwork, and his gloves were darned.

"Don't keep pulling your gloves about in that way," said his mother; "you will spoil them." Then, turning towards Pierrotin, she said, "Are you the conductor?" Then, recognising him, she said, "Ah! it is you, Pierrotin," and stepped aside to speak to him.

"You are quite well, Madame Clapart?" said Pierrotin, with a mixture of familiarity and respect.

"Yes, Pierrotin. Take good care of my son, he is journeying alone for the first time."

"Oh! if he is going to M. Moreau's!" began the other, in order to ascertain if he really were going there.

"Yes. He will not repose entirely on a bed of roses; but his future career requires that he should go there."

This answer struck Pierrotin, who hesitated whether he should communicate to Madame Clapart his fears respecting the agent. The manner in which Pierrotin had become acquainted with Madame Clapart was by taking presents of vegetables, fruit, and sometimes of game to her from M. Moreau. This kindness on the part of the agent was a return for the shelter he had

received from her at a time of great danger. This woman, now so poor, and married to a stupid, weak-minded man, who was incapable of rising in the world, and was now, moreover, past the middle age, was once connected with one of the five kings who reigned under the denomination of the Directory, and by his influence she was married to a contractor named Husson, who made an enormous fortune, and was ruined by Napoleon in 1802. The sudden change from opulence to misery drove him mad, and he drowned himself, leaving his beautiful wife *enceinte*. At this time she gave shelter to Moreau, until means of escape to a foreign land were procured for him. In her deep distress she accepted the offer of her present husband, who was then twenty-seven, and said to be of some promise; and certainly, if he had been gifted with an amount of sense above the common, he would not have failed to rise, for at that time the Emperor was glad to avail himself of the services of any intelligent men. But Clapart had nothing but good looks, and no intelligence at all; therefore he remained in an obscure situation with a salary of only 1800 francs a-year. When Moreau became secretary to the Count de Serisy, and heard of the miserable position to which his friend was reduced, he was able to procure for her the post of principal attendant of the Emperor's mother. Still, in spite of such influential protection, her husband remained in the same inferior position; for his incapacity was so obvious, that it was impossible to raise him to a superior post, and even that which he held he was dismissed from on the fall of the Emperor, and his wife also lost her situation at the same time. Thus the brilliant Aspasie of the Directory, who had had the disposal of millions, had nothing to depend on but 1200 francs, which her husband received for his services in an office where he had been placed by the Count de Serisy, who had likewise obtained for her son, Oscar Husson, one of the half-purses in Henry the Fourth's school. Oscar was the hope and the very life of his mother;

and the only reproach she was open to was an exaggerated fondness for him, a feeling which was not in the least participated by her husband. Unfortunately, Oscar was endowed with a dose of silliness, which his mother never suspected, notwithstanding the jeers of her husband at his expense. This silliness, or to speak more correctly, this lack of acuteness, caused M. Moreau such uneasiness, that he had requested his mother to send him to Presles for a month, in order that he might see what he was fit for, and if it were possible to prepare him to be his successor as agent. We may mention that one of the chief causes of Oscar's stupid self-conceit was the fact that he had been born in the house of the Emperor's mother, and had always retained a lively recollection of the splendours he had seen there ; moreover, his mother, it is only reasonable to suppose, had talked to him more than was wise of her past splendour. These reflections had perhaps solaced him during the time he was at the public school ; where the scholars on the foundation are always subjected to such continual insults from those who pay, unless they happen to have physical strength sufficient to make themselves feared.

Incapable of divining the profound attachment of Moreau for Madame Clapart, or hers for her *protégé* of 1797, Pierrotin decided on saying nothing to her of the danger in which Moreau was placed ; and it was very evident from his repeated " Yes, madame ! " " Good, madame ! " that he wished to put an end to her repeated injunctions respecting her boy ; who, to her imagination, seemed to be setting out on a long voyage instead of merely a journey of a few miles.

" Oscar, don't remain there more than a fortnight, however much they may try to persuade you," resumed Madame Clapart, returning to her son. " Whatever you do, it is quite certain you will not please Madame Moreau ; besides, you must be back to go to Belleville to your uncle Cardot's."

" Yes, mamma."

"Be sure you never speak of servitude," said she, sinking her voice. . . . "Always bear in mind that Madame Moreau was a lady's maid."

"Yes, mamma."

Like all young people whose self-love is very sensitive, Oscar appeared annoyed at being admonished in this way on the threshold of the Silver Lion hotel.

"Well, adieu, mamma; they are going to start; here are the horses."

The mother, forgetting that she was in the open air in the presence of spectators, embraced her Oscar; and, taking a roll out of her reticule, she said—

"Stop, you have forgotten your roll and chocolate! My child, mind what I told you about the inns; if you take the least thing in one of them, they will make you pay ten times as much as it is worth."

Oscar wished his mother a long way off when she put the roll and chocolate into his pocket. There were two witnesses to this scene, whose dress, age, and manners, and the air of independence which they exhibited—for their mother had not come with them—made them the envy of the youth who had just escaped from school.

"He said *mamma*," remarked one of them to the other.

This remark reached Oscar's ears, and caused him to utter an impatient "Adieu, mother."

Let us admit that Madame Clapart spoke a little too loud, and seemed desirous of admitting the passers by into the confidence of her tenderness.

"What is the matter with you, Oscar?" asked the poor mother, wounded by her son's behaviour. "I don't understand you," she continued, with an air of severity, thinking herself capable of imposing respect upon him (an error common to all mothers who spoil their children). Then resuming an affectionate tone, she continued: "Listen, my Oscar; you have a propensity for talking, saying everything you know and everything you don't know, through bravado and a foolish vanity. Endeavour to keep a

curb on your tongue. You are not sufficiently advanced in life, my dear treasure, to judge of people whom you may meet, and there is nothing more dangerous than talking in public vehicles ; besides, well-bred people never speak in them."

The sound of the steps of the two young men coming up the gateway reminded Oscar that they might have heard this lecture ; so, to get rid of his mother, he said,

"Mamma, you are in a draught here, and may take cold ; besides, I am going to get up in the coach."

The mother was touched by his consideration ; kissed him as if he were on the point of starting for a long voyage, and walked to the entrance of the vehicle with tears in her eyes,

"Don't forget to give five francs to the servants," said she. "Write to me at least three times in the fortnight ; behave well, and don't forget the advice I have given you. Always remember the kindness of M. Moreau, listen to him as if he were your father, and follow his instructions."

In entering the vehicle, Oscar showed his blue stockings, by the creeping up of his pantaloons ; and the patch on these latter from the movement of his coat-tails. The smile on the countenances of the two young men proved that they had noticed this latter circumstance, and the vanity of the youth was thus still further wounded.

How Oscar regretted at that moment that trouble had so defaced his mother's beauty ! that misery and self-denial caused her to be so poorly dressed ! One of the young men—who wore spurs—pushed the other with his elbow, as if to call attention to the poor woman, and the other curled his moustache with a gesture which seemed to say, "A pretty costume !"

"How can I get rid of my mother ?" said Oscar to himself, looking thoughtfully at her as she stood smiling and nodding.

"What is the matter with you ?" asked his mother. Oscar pretended not to have heard. The monster !

Perhaps Madame Clapart showed a want of tact in thus remaining near him as if he were a child who required watching. But the dominant sentiments have so much in them which is egotistical.

"George, do you like children when you are travelling?" asked one young man of his friend.

"Yes, my good Amaury, if they are weaned, if they are named Oscar, and if they have chocolate."

These phrases were exchanged in an under tone, yet so that Oscar might notice them or not as he pleased; the expression of his face being watched, to enable George to judge how far he might amuse himself at the youth's expense during the journey. Oscar pretended not to have heard. He looked about to see if his mother, who weighed upon him like a nightmare, was still there. He involuntarily compared his dress with that of the unknown, and thought how glad he should be if they would go further away; for he felt himself crushed and rendered utterly insignificant by the dashing appearance of the one called George, who was to be his fellow-traveller.

The time for starting was long past, but still Pierrotin stood with his whip in his hand, looking in the direction from which he expected the count. At this moment the scene was a little animated by the arrival of a young man, accompanied by a real *gamin*, followed by a commissioner drawing a truck, containing a considerable quantity of luggage, which, after the interchange of a few words with the driver, was hoisted to the top of the vehicle. The youth was clad in a costume which was anything but *recherché*. He did not appear at all abashed by the sight of his dirty boots, and he regarded the spots on his blouse more to see their effect than for any other reason. The expression of his face was lively and intelligent, and indicated that he was accustomed to rely on himself. His companion was a young man, whose costume, while more pretentious than the other's, was hardly worth more, but it was well brushed and clean.

"Can we go and take a cup of coffee before you start?"

"Don't be long," replied Pierrotin.

"Good, we have a quarter of an hour," answered the younger, whom his companion called Mistigris, a nickname by which he was known in the studio.

When these two returned and took their places they found Oscar, George, and an excessively fat farmer, named Leger, in their places. They took theirs, and there became a general outcry against delaying to start any longer. This discontent forced a movement, the vehicle was drawn outside the gateway, and the passengers supposed that at last they were off; but no sooner had the vehicle been drawn outside into the street, than the horses were pulled up, and Pierrotin got down and ran up the courtyard.

"Hallo!" called out Mistigris, "is your master subject to those attacks?"

"He is gone to the stable, to get what is left of his oats," answered the stableman, who was well up in all the ruses for calming the impatience of travellers.

After some further remarks and the interchange of some burlesqued proverbs between Mistigris and his companion, Pierrotin returned with the Count de Serisy, from whom he had, no doubt, received further injunctions not to mention his name. There was some little difficulty in finding a comfortable seat for the count, for those who came first selected the best places; but the difficulty was overcome by Mistigris, at the request of his master, resigning his, and perching himself on another part of the conveyance, which did not, however, prevent his joining in the conversation. On taking his seat the count examined his fellow-passengers, to see if the notary's managing clerk was among them; and, finding he was not, he felt secure respecting his incognito. Let us say a few words here respecting his personal appearance. His face was disfigured with pimples, and had inflamed appearance, owing to an affection of the

skin, which had been caused by intense application to State affairs, and which had defied the skill of the most eminent doctors. His eyebrows were of a jet black, and contrasted oddly with his white hair; and it was in his eyes and his ample brow alone that the physiognomist would have read the evidence of his ability.

When the vehicle began the steep ascent of the Faubourg Saint Denis, Pierrotin said—

“Père Leger! shall we get down?”

“I will get down, too,” said the count, on hearing the name; “we ought to think of the horses;” and then pressing Pierrotin’s arm, he said in a whisper, “Preserve my secret, and there are ten Louis for you.”

“If we keep on at this rate,” cried George, “we shall get over the fourteen leagues in a fortnight.”

“Is it my fault?” asked Pierrotin. “A traveller wished to get down.”

“Listen, Pierrotin—since it is Pierrotin—if you intend to continue this way of going, just say so, and I will pay for my place and hire a donkey at the gate yonder, because I am in a hurry.”

“He will go well presently,” said Leger.

“I am never more than half an hour behind,” said Pierrotin.

The desire of talking and of making a figure among strangers, even if only for a few hours, induced George to pass himself off as having served in the East, under a pasha, who had rewarded him with a seraglio, and sundry other advantages, all of which he had abandoned to return to France. On arriving at Saint Denis they all got out to get some refreshment, and the count took advantage of the opportunity to look at the name on the portfolio which he had seen George handling, and found it to be that of his notary, Crottat. Fearing, and not without reason, that, if Farmer Leger saw the name, he would not hesitate to open the portfolio, the count opened it himself, and took out of it the deed relating to the Moulineaux property, and put it in his pocket.



Meanwhile George had been treating all his fellow-passengers who would accept his offers, and the consequence was that Oscar had drunk more than was good for him. As soon as they resumed their journey, George added further details to the romance he had been relating ; and, though the two painters did not believe what he said any more than the count, yet the elder of the two could not refrain, in reply to an inquiry from George, giving the name of a distinguished painter as his own ; and the reason of his journeying in such a modest guise, that he was going to a grand country-house, where he was expected by the wife of the proprietor. Then he, too, invented a series of adventures which he professed to have met with on a journey to Rome, which were confirmed and rendered more piquant by the droll observations of Mistigris.

This conversation respecting lords, pashas, and ceilings, for the painting of which the artist, who had assumed the name of Schinner, professed to have received thirty thousand francs, induced Pierrotin to exclaim—

“I am carrying kings to-day ! what fees ! They will come at a lucky moment ; for what do you think, Père Leger, of that hard-hearted firm who are building my new carriage ? They insist on having the whole of the remainder of the purchase money down before they will let me take possession of it, and I have not enough by a thousand francs. Think of their being so hard with a man who has been established eight years, and who is the father of a family besides.”

“You have only eight hundred francs to find now,” said the count, who thought the information addressed to Père Leger was intended as a hint to him.

“That’s true,” said Pierrotin. “Hup, hup, Rougeot.”

The sham Schinner resumed his narrative, and, happening to say that Mistigris would one day paint landscapes after Hobbema, Ruysdael, Claude Lorraine, Poussin, and others, the count interrupted him by remarking—

"Let him paint in the style of only one of them, that will be quite enough."

"If you continually interrupt, sir," said Oscar, "we shall quite lose the thread of the narrative."

"Nor is it to you either that monsieur is speaking," said George to the count.

"It is not polite to interrupt a person speaking," said Mistigris, sententiously; "but we have all done the same thing, and we should be great losers if we did not sprinkle our discourse with little amenities in exchanging our reflections. All Frenchmen are equal in a public vehicle, as they are before the law; therefore continue, agreeable old gentleman . . . . humbug us in your turn. That is done in the best society, and you know the proverb, 'When among wolves, howl as they do.'"

Schinner continued his tale, which excited the envy and vexation of Oscar, who could hardly forgive himself that he had no adventures to tell, and that he should be such a poor, ordinary person among such great men as George and Schinner.

The next stoppage was at an inn in Saint Brice, to allow those who felt so disposed to take breakfast. Here George, while waiting for the wine he had ordered to be put upon the table, pulled out his cigar-case and offered a cigar to Oscar, and another to Schinner. The former began smoking his with an air as if he were used to it; but his sneezing, coughing, and choking showed so plainly that he was making himself ill, that Mistigris snatched it away from him and put it into his own mouth, and Oscar did not dare to attempt to recover it.

Wounded by the feeling of his inferiority, Oscar sat down on a stone beside the entrance to the yard, and was so absorbed by the mental comparison of his dress and general appearance with George's, that he did not notice that, in the act of sitting down, he had drawn his pantaloons up, so as to show that new feet had been knitted on to the old legs of his stockings; a clever piece of work on the part of his mother.

"We are brethren at bottom," said Mistigris, raising his pantaloons so as to show an article of a similar kind.

The Count de Serisy, who was standing with his arms folded a little in the background, could not help smiling at the liveliness and jokes of Mistigris and his friend and George.

"Well! will you have Moulineaux?" said the innkeeper to Père Leger, to whom he was going to show a horse he had for sale. "It will be droll if you *take the shine* out of a peer of France, a statesman like the Count de Serisy."

The count appeared to take no notice, but he heard Leger reply in a low voice—

"He is 'done.'"

"So much the better, I like to see the nobles *sold*. . . . I would lend you twenty thousand francs myself if you wanted them; but I heard that the count had sent to Margueron to invite him to dine at Presles to-day."

"That was his excellency's intention, but we also have our dodges."

"The count will place Margueron's son, and you have not a place to give him."

"No; but if the count has got the ministers on his side, I have got Louis Eighteen himself," answered Leger, in a low tone, which but just reached the count's ear, "and forty thousand of his portraits given to Moreau will enable me to buy Moulineaux for two hundred and sixty thousand francs, which the count will be glad enough to buy of me for a hundred thousand francs more."

"Not bad, Bourgeois," exclaimed the innkeeper; "after all, the farm is worth that to him."

"Certainly it is; the investment will bring him in nearly three per cent."

"What will Moreau get altogether?"

"Well, if the count gives him ten thousand francs, he will make fifty thousand by the transaction, but he will have well earned them. Besides, the count is

coming to live at Presles, or he would not have decorated the house in the way he has ; and in that case M. Moreau will not have much chance of making anything in future."

The two went on to the stables, and the count heard no more. Although he could hardly have stronger proofs of the perfidy of his agent, the count was reluctant to believe him guilty, and tried to find excuses for him. "All these people seem to think we are fair game for them, and there is something delightful in defeating their plans," said he to himself.

Pierrotin brought some water for his horses at this moment, and the count, thinking that he would probably breakfast with the innkeeper and the farmer, took him aside, and to secure himself from the possibility of being betrayed by any indiscretion on the part of the driver, he promised to give him the thousand francs he required to pay for his new coach if he preserved a profound silence as to his having been a passenger until the following morning.

"I understand, M. le Comte, you may rely on me ;" and then stepping to the door of the inn, he called out, "We must make haste, I am behind time, and I have got some fish to deliver."

"Nonsense, man," cried the innkeeper ; "what a confounded hurry you are in ! Come and have some breakfast with us. Colonel George pays for some wine at fifty sous the bottle, and a bottle of champagne to wind up with."

"No," answered Pierrotin, "not to-day ; I can go on slowly, Père Leger ; there is a steep hill, you know, just here, and a walk will do you good."

"Very well, you can go on ;" and, turning to the innkeeper, he added, "Have the horse I think of buying harnessed to your cabriolet, and I shall have an opportunity of seeing how he goes ; we can easily overtake Pierrotin."

To the great satisfaction of the count, Pierrotin started at once. The two artists had walked on and

stopped on the summit of the hill to enjoy the beauty of the view from thence, and were in the act of resuming their places in the vehicle, when the innkeeper drove up with Leger and George.

"What a beautiful view, great painter!" remarked the latter, on taking his seat.

"Bah! it ought not to astonish you, who have travelled in Spain and in the East."

"And who has still two cigars left at your service, if our smoking does not annoy anybody. I won't offer one to this youth, for the few mouthfuls he had were quite enough for him."

As the count and Leger made no reply, it was assumed, as is usual in such cases, that they had no objection.

While they were lighting their cigars, Oscar, who was irritated at being treated with so little ceremony, said —

"If I have not been one of Mina's aides-de-camp like you, Colonel George, nor travelled in the East, I shall, perhaps, go there one of these days. The career for which my family intend me, will, I hope, spare me the necessity of travelling in a public conveyance when I am your age. After having once become a personage, I will remain in my position."

"*Et cetera punctum*," interrupted Mistigris, imitating Oscar's voice, which was in that state of transition when it is so exceedingly disagreeable to hear.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Schinner, "I wonder how the horses manage to get along with such a load of responsibilities behind them."

"And pray what career may your family intend to start you in?" inquired George, seriously.

"Diplomacy," answered Oscar.

There was a roar of laughter from the great painter, Mistigris, and Leger, and even the count could not help smiling; George alone preserved his gravity.

"By Allah!" he observed, "there is nothing to laugh at. Only, young man, it appears to me that the

social position of your respectable mamma is not, just now, precisely that of an ambassadress."

"My mother, sir!" said Oscar, indignantly. "Why, that was our housekeeper."

"I am very happy, no doubt," said the count, "to have travelled with three men who are, or will be, so celebrated — an artist already illustrious, a future general, and a young diplomatist, who will one day restore Belgium to France."

After having committed the odious action of denying his mother, Oscar, who was furious at being ridiculed, resolved to vanquish their incredulity at any price.

"All that glitters is not gold," said he.

"You ought to have said \* . . . . . If you don't know your proverbs better than that, you will not go far in diplomacy."

"If I don't know my proverbs, I know my road."

"You ought to go a good way too," said George; "for the housekeeper of your noble house gave you provisions enough for a voyage across the Atlantic — biscuit, chocolate."

"A peculiar kind of bread and chocolate," interrupted Oscar, "for my stomach is much too delicate to take the garbage of an inn."

"The expression is as delicate as your stomach."

"The word is used in the best society," said Mistigris; "I use it myself at my eating-house, the Black Hen."

"Your instructor is no doubt some celebrated professor," observed Schinner.

"The Abbé Loraux, vicar of Saint Sulpice," answered Oscar, remembering the name of the school confessor.

"You were quite right to have private tuition,"

\* It was the fashion among artists in those days to interlard their conversation with proverbs; but, instead of quoting from the book, they substituted for the principal word another having a similar sound but a different meaning, or none at all; a translation of which into English would be very flat. — *Trans.*

said Mistigris ; "but no doubt you will reward your abbé?"

"Certainly ; he will be a bishop some day," replied Oscar.

"By the influence of your family."

"Perhaps we shall assist in putting him in his place, for the Abbé Frayssinous often comes to our house."

"Ah ! you know the Abbé Frayssinous ?" asked the count.

"He is under obligations to my father," replied Oscar.

"You are doubtless going to your country seat ?" said George.

"No, sir ; but I am not ashamed to say where I am going. I am going to the Count de Serisy's at Presles."

"Ah ! you are going to Presles," cried Schinner, becoming as red as a cherry.

"You know his lordship ?" asked George.

"The count is at Presles !" exclaimed Leger, with anxious astonishment.

"Apparently," answered Oscar, "since I am on my way there."

"And you have often seen the count ?" asked the Count de Serisy, regarding him with some uneasiness.

"As I see you," replied Oscar. "I am his son's companion, who is just about my age, and we go out riding together every day."

"Upon my word," said the count to Oscar, "I am delighted to be with a young man who can tell me what the count is like ; for I have need of his influence in a claim I have against the American Government."

"Oh ! if you wish to succeed," replied Oscar with a cunning expression of countenance, "don't address yourself to him but to his wife ; he is foolishly fond of her—nobody knows better than I how fond, and his wife can't bear him."

"What for ?" asked George.

"He has a skin disease which renders him hideous. He lives alone in his splendid house, and it requires great influence to get an interview with him. He gets

up very early in the morning and works several hours. Then they stew him in a kind of iron box in sulphur baths, for he always hopes that he may be cured; he has great hopes from a Scotch doctor, and——”

After many other remarks which galled the count to the quick, Oscar wound up by saying, “Therefore, sir, if you wish to succeed, go and see the Marquis Aiglemont. If you have this old adorer of the countess on your side, you will get at once the lady and her husband in your interest.”

“Why, then, since you know all these things respecting the count, you must have been his valet,” said the painter.

“His valet!” exclaimed Oscar.

“*Dame!* a man does not say such things of his friend in a public vehicle,” said Mistigris. “For my part, I don’t listen to you.”

“Learn, great painter,” said George, sententiously, “that a man cannot say evil of one he does not know, and the youth has proved that he knows his Serisy by heart. If he had only spoken to us of the countess——”

“Not another word about the Countess de Serisy, young people!” cried the count. “I am the friend of her brother, the Marquis de Ronquerolles, and whoever casts a doubt on the honour of the countess will have to render me an account of his words.”

“Monsieur is in the right,” said the artist; “one ought not to speak evil, even in jest, about women.”

“God, Honour, and the Ladies! I have seen that melodrama,” said Mistigris.

“If I don’t know Mina, I know the chancellor,” said the count, looking sternly at George. “If I don’t wear decorations I can prevent them from being given to those who do not deserve them,” said he, looking at the artist. “In fact, I know so many people that I am acquainted with M. Grindot, the architect at Presles. . . . Stop, Pierrotin, I want to get down a moment.”

Pierrotin pulled up at a little inn, where the passengers got out.



"Where is that little vagabond going?" asked the count of Pierrotin, taking him aside and pointing at Oscar.

"To your agent's. He is the son of a poor lady at Paris, to whom I often take presents of game, poultry, and vegetables from your agent—a Madame Husson."

The count departed, and as soon as he was gone Leger came to Pierrotin and asked him who he was.

"I don't know him," answered the driver, "but he something like the prince to whom the Château de Muffliers belongs."

"Pierrotin thinks it is the Count de Muffliers," said Leger, on returning to the vehicle.

The young men looked at each other with a sheepish air, and seemed very much concerned at the possible consequences of their stories.

"That is what may be termed *making more noise than work*," remarked Mistigris.

"You see that I know the count," said Oscar to the others.

"That is possible," answered George, "but you will never be an ambassador; when one wants to chatter in a public vehicle he should take care to talk without saying anything, as I do."

At this moment the count resumed his place, and they continued their journey in profound silence. After a time, the count observed, "Well, my friends, we are as mute as if we were on our way to the scaffold."

Mistigris was the only one who made any reply to the count's observation; but after going a little further, Oscar asked to whom a château belonged which he pointed out.

"It is the château of Franconville; but how is it that you who have been so frequently at Presles, do not know this?" asked the count.

"Monsieur knows men but not châteaux," said Mistigris.

"Sucking diplomatists may be pardoned if they have distractions," said George.

"Remember my name," said Oscar, savagely. "I am Oscar Husson, and in ten years I shall be celebrated."

After uttering these words in a most conceited manner, Oscar threw himself back in his corner.

"Husson of where?" asked Mistigris.

"Of a great family, the Hussons of La Cerisaie" (the name of the street in which Oscar lived); "Monsieur was born under the steps of the imperial throne," replied the count.

Oscar reddened to the very roots of his hair, and was greatly troubled.

Pierrotin stopped in sight of the magnificent chateau of Presles, and the count got out, but not until he had given some sarcastic advice to his fellow-passengers which made them feel exceedingly uncomfortable.

"If ever it happens to me to humbug in a public conveyance again," said the sham Schinner, "I will fight a duel with myself."

"Do you know," said George to Oscar, "if it should happen to be the Count de Serisy, I would not be in your skin for a trifle."

This observation so frightened Oscar that he became deadly pale, and the effects of the wine at once disappeared.

"Here you are at Presles, gentlemen," called out Pierrotin.

"What, we are there!" exclaimed at the same moment George, the artist, and Oscar.

"Yes."

"Very good," said George, who wished to conceal from the others that he was going to the chateau. "I am going to the farm at Moulineaux."

"Then you are coming to my house," said Leger. "Pray what do you want of me, colonel?"

"To taste your butter," answered George, seizing his portfolio and making his escape.

"Pierrotin, leave my things at the agent's, I am going straight to the chateau." Saying this, Oscar plunged into a path leading to the wood without knowing where he was going, but Leger called out to

him that he was going the wrong way, and that he must enter by the little gate which he pointed out.

Forced to enter, Oscar was alarmed by seeing Pierrotin carrying Schinner's luggage into the porter's lodge, thus making it evident that they were going to stay for some time at the château. Of all the party, Pierrotin was the only one who felt happy.

Oscar looked about him, and suddenly saw M. Moreau, who came to him and taking his hand welcomed him to his house, and inquired kindly after his mother. Then turning to the two artists he said, "I suppose you are the gentlemen whom M. Grindot, the architect, spoke to us about." On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he directed the porter to carry their luggage into the château, and place it in the rooms which had been prepared for them; and then he added, speaking to the two painters, "I have the count's orders to offer you my table, gentlemen—we dine at five o'clock. If you are sportsmen, you may divert yourselves very pleasantly, for I have permission to shoot and fish, and there are twelve thousand acres of preserves."

The artists followed the porter, and Husson followed the agent, who took him towards the wood, first sending one of his sons to tell his mother that young Husson had arrived and that he was himself obliged to go to Moulineaux for a little while.

M. Moreau was a man about fifty years of age, of an appearance which would have induced one to imagine that he was a stern, severe man, whereas he was, in fact, an exceedingly kind, good-hearted man. Oscar was never entirely at his ease with him, and he was less so now than ever. The agent conversed with him for a few minutes, and then placed him in the hands of his son to take him home.

The house inhabited by the agent was situated in the middle of a large garden, and had formerly been the luxurious residence of a *fermier général*, by whom it had been built a few years before the Revolution at

an immense expense. During the revolutionary period, it had fallen into decay and become ruinous, but a trifling expenditure by the count had put a sufficient portion of it into good repair to make a very complete residence for Moreau, who had, besides, the advantage of the gardener's services free of cost; so that the whole was a very handsome place to live in, and, taken altogether, might well have been supposed the residence of a gentleman who was managing the estate to oblige a friend. The influence which Moreau had with the count had been shown on several occasions when somewhat important favours had been demanded by him of the count in behalf of persons in the neighbourhood of Presles; so that, in spite of his wife having once been a lady's maid, she was well received in the houses of the principal people who lived in the vicinity of the château. Vain of her personal appearance, and dreading the arrival of her former mistress, who would have been capable of humiliating her if she saw the manner in which she imitated the dress and behaviour of the great ladies of Paris, she was anxious that her husband should make the fifty thousand francs out of the Moulineaux business that they might retire from their present position. On the day of which we are speaking, she had dressed herself elaborately for the reception of the two artists, and was wandering up and down the garden when she was called in-doors by her son to receive them, who, hearing from the porter what a display she made, had dressed themselves in their best style before calling upon her. It is not necessary to repeat the conversation which took place between Madame Moreau and the artists, inasmuch as it has no bearing on the career of either of the persons already introduced; it will be sufficient to say that they were not long in detecting the Abigail in spite of her fine clothing.

While they were in the height of their discourse, a servant came in to tell Madame Moreau that the count had arrived and wanted the key of his apartments.

"Did he say he wished to see me?"

"No, madame."

"Well, take the key," said she, with an air of annoyance at the interruption, which she assumed to hide the anxiety she really felt.

"Mamma, here is Oscar Husson!" called out the youngest of her sons, bringing in that individual, who blushed as red as a poppy on seeing the artists and the manner in which they were dressed.

"Here you are at last, *mon petit* Oscar," said Madame Moreau, in no very agreeable tones. "I hope you are going to dress. Your mother does not seem to have accustomed you to dine in company, or she would not have sent you in such a costume as that," she continued, regarding it contemptuously.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mistigris, "a future diplomatist ought not to lack costumes."

"A future diplomatist?" said madame, interrogatively.

The tears came into Oscar's eyes as he looked first at one and then the other of his fellow-passengers beseechingly.

"A pleasantry," replied the elder artist, who wished to save the youth from the consequences of his indiscretion.

"He wished to joke like us," said Mistigris, "and now you see he looks like an ass on a common."

"Madame," said Rosalie, returning, "his Excellency orders dinner for eight persons, to be served at six o'clock. What is to be done?"

While madame and the maid were discussing the necessary arrangements, the two artists and Oscar exchanged looks of frightful apprehension.

"His Excellency! who?" asked the artist.

"Why, the Count de Serisy," answered little Moreau.

"Could he have come by chance in the same conveyance with us?" said Mistigris.

"Oh!" answered Oscar, "the Count de Serisy would only travel in a carriage with four horses."

"How did he come?" asked the painter of madame, as she returned to her seat with a mortified air.

"I don't know at all. I cannot understand his lordship's arrival, nor what he has come for. And Moreau, too, is away!"

"His Excellency requests Monsieur Schinner to step up to the château, and also requests that he will dine with him, and Monsieur Mistigris likewise," said a servant entering.

"We are caught," said the former; "the party we took for a bourgeois is the count."

Oscar became petrified with fear.

"And you who talked to him of his wife's adorers and his secret malady," said Mistigris, laughing and moving towards the château.

"What do you mean?" asked madame; and receiving no reply, she took Oscar by the arm and shook him roughly, but was obliged to leave him at last, for it was impossible to get a word from him.

The count on quitting Pierrotin's vehicle had taken a path through the wood, which enabled him to reach the château before the others. On entering the grounds by a side gate, he saw a horse standing beside a lodge.

"Is Moreau here?" he asked the keeper.

"No, monseigneur; but he has left his horse while he went up to the house to give some orders. He is coming back presently, because he is going to ride over to Moulineaux before dinner."

This answer was full of meaning to the count. He went into the lodge and wrote a note, and then returning to the gamekeeper he said—

"If you wish to keep your place, you will get on that horse, and gallop as hard as you can to Beaumont, and give this note to Monsieur Margueron. Mind, not a word to any living soul." Then turning to the woman, he said, "If Moreau asks for his horse, you can say that I have taken it." So saying the count pursued his way across the park. However much a man living in the world may become familiar with baseness

and ingratitude, one capable of loving so strongly as the Count de Serisy is always young as regards perfidy. It pained the count so much to believe his agent guilty that at Saint Brice he persuaded himself that Moreau had suffered himself to be drawn into the matter by Leger, and that, after all, nothing had been settled positively, and he might draw back ; and he had almost made up his mind that he would administer a strong reprimand and forgive him. But when Oscar revealed his secret infirmities, which he knew could only have been learned from Moreau, every sentiment of humanity was wounded, and when he found himself alone in his park he shed bitter tears at the thought that the man he had trusted had mocked him with his wife, or with the ancient Aspasia of the Directory.

When Moreau went to get his horse the woman gave him the message left by the count, and to escape from further questioning she ran in and fastened the door. The agent was greatly troubled, and started off at a rapid pace through the wood towards his house. Here he found the dairymaid disputing with a good-looking young man ; no other, in fact, than George, he who had represented himself in the conveyance as a colonel, and the friend and aide-de-camp of the Spanish general, Mina.

"The count said Mina's aide-de-camp, a colonel," repeated the servant, as Moreau came up.

"I am not a colonel," answered George.

"Well ! is your name George ?"

"What is the matter ?" asked the agent, intervening.

"Sir, my name is George Marest ; I am the son of a rich ironmonger at Paris, and am come from Maître Crottat, the notary, whose second clerk I am, to see the Count de Serisy on business."

"And I repeat to you, sir, what monseigneur said to me : ' A colonel will present himself shortly, named Czerni-George, an aide-de-camp of General Mina, who came in Pierrotin's coach ; show him into the waiting-room.' "

"You must not jest with his lordship," said the agent; "go on up, sir. But how could the count know that you came with Pierrotin?"

"Evidently he was one of the passengers," replied the clerk.

"One of the passengers!" exclaimed Moreau.

"I am sure of it, from what the girl has just said."

"How?" said Moreau.

"Ah! To mystify my fellow-passengers, and having spurs on, I gave myself out as a cavalry colonel, and told them a heap of fibs respecting Egypt, Greece, and Spain, just to make them laugh."

"What was the individual like whom you suppose to be the count?"

"He had a face the colour of a red brick, perfectly white hair, and black eyebrows."

"That is he!"

"Then I am lost!" exclaimed George.

"Why?"

"I joked him about his decorations."

"Bah! he is too good-hearted to notice that; come at once to the château."

When Moreau learned what the clerk had come about, he felt sure that something was wrong; and it was with a fast-beating heart that he knocked at the count's door.

"Is that you, *Monsieur* Moreau?" he called out.

"Yes, monseigneur."

"Come in!"

The count had put on a pair of white pantaloons, a white waistcoat, and a black coat, on which glittered the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour and the Golden Fleece. The blue riband contrasted with the white waistcoat, and he had probably got himself up with so much care with the view of impressing the goodman Margueron by the sight of the emblems of his greatness.

"Well," said the count, seating himself, and leaving



Moreau standing, "we cannot, then, come to an arrangement with Margueron?"

"At this moment he asks too much for it."

"But why does he not come?" asked the count, affecting a thoughtful air.

"He is ill, monseigneur."

"You are sure of that?"

"I have been there——"

"Sir," said the count, assuming an air of sternness terrible to see, "what would you do to a man in whom you placed confidence, who had seen you dressing a wound which you desire to keep secret, if he went and laughed over it with a gossiping woman?"

"I would beat him to a mummy."

"And if, besides that, you found that he deceived and robbed you?"

"I would try to get evidence of his guilt, and send him to the galleys."

"Listen, *Monsieur* Moreau! You have doubtless talked of my infirmities at Madame Clapart's, and have ridiculed my love for my wife; for little Husson enlightened all the passengers in a public vehicle this morning with a host of circumstances relative to my treatment in my own presence, and, God knows, in what language! He dared even to calumniate my wife. I also learnt from the mouth of Leger of the plan concerted between himself, you, and the notary, at Beaumont, relative to the Moulineaux property. If you have been to M. Margueron it was to tell him to pretend to be sick; he is so little ill that I expect him to dine with me. Well, sir, I pardon you for having made a fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand francs in seventeen years. I understand that. If you had asked me to give you what you took without permission, or for leave to accept what was offered you, I would have given it you; you are the father of a family. In your indelicacy you have been better than another, I believe. But that you, who knew my labours for the State, who have seen me working eighteen hours a day for months at a time, who knew how deeply I loved

Madame de Serisy, to have gossiped over my sufferings and my affections before a child, with a Madame Husson. . . . ."

"Monseigneur. . . ."

"It is unpardonable. To attack a man's interests is nothing ; but to attack his feelings, his affections !" . . . . . The count buried his face in his hands for a moment, and then resumed. "I leave you what you have, and will forget that you exist. For the sake of my dignity and your own honour, we will part decently, for I do not forget what your father did for mine. You will arrange quietly with M. de Reybert, who succeeds you. Remain calm, and do not give people an opportunity of gossiping about you. As to the little vagabond who nearly caused my death coming down, send him away from Presles directly, let him sleep at the inn to-night. I could not answer for myself if I were to meet with him again."

"I do not merit so much kindness, monseigneur," said Moreau, with tears in his eyes. "Yes, it is true, if I had been actually dishonest I should have made double what I have, and I am quite willing to account for what I have. But let me tell you, monseigneur, that in speaking of you to Madame Clapart it was not in derision, but with the desire of learning whether she was acquainted with any remedies used by the people with which doctors are unacquainted. As to my speaking of your sentiments before the little one, we believed he was asleep, and I constantly spoke in terms of affection and respect. The misfortune is, that indiscretions must be punished as crimes. . . . I accept my punishment, and to no other person in the world have I ever spoken of these matters, not even to my wife, as you will find if you ask her. . . ."

"That is enough," interrupted the count, whose conviction was not to be shaken. "Arrange your affairs and mine, that you may leave in October."

The count and Moreau descended, the one calm and dignified, the other pale and agitated.

While this scene was passing between the count

and Moreau the lawyer Crottat had arrived, and was waiting in the drawing-room with his clerk, who had assumed an exceedingly penitent air, and the two artists, who appeared greatly embarrassed. M. de Reybert, a man about fifty, of somewhat forbidding aspect, had also arrived in company with M. Margueron and the notary at Beaumont, who held a bundle of papers in his hand. When the count entered, George and the elder painter felt as if they were going to be ill; but Mistigris, with the courage inspired by having his Sunday clothes on, and having nothing to reproach himself with, said pretty loudly—

“Well! he looks infinitely better in that dress.”

“*Petit drôle*,” said the count, taking him by the ear, and leading him forward, “we both practise decoration. Have you recognised your work, my dear Schinner?” asked he of the other painter, pointing to the painted ceiling.

“Monseigneur,” answered the artist, “I was wrong to arrogate to myself a celebrated name; but what has happened to-day will compel me to exert myself to render illustrious that which I really bear—Joseph Bridau.”

“You took up my defence,” said the count, quickly; “and I hope you will do me the pleasure to dine with me, as well as our witty Mistigris here.”

“Bridau!” suddenly exclaimed the count; “are you a relative of the *chef de division* of that name, who, by his earnest labours under the Empire, perished a victim of his zeal?”

“His son, monseigneur,” replied Joseph, with a bow.

“You are welcome here,” said the count, taking his hand in his: “I knew your father: and you may rely on my interesting myself in favour of your brother, who is accused of treason, and about to be tried by the Chamber of Peers. . . . But whose pupil is Mistigris? You are too young to have one.”

“My friend Schinner’s, who lent him to me. His name is really Leon de Lora.”

Turning to George, the count said, "As to Colonel Ozerni-George, the friend of Ali Pacha, Mina's aide-de-camp——"

"He?—my second clerk!" interrupted Crottat.

"You are in error, Maître Crottat," said the count, with an air of severity. "A clerk who desires to become a notary, does not leave important papers in a public carriage at the mercy of the passengers, nor spend twenty francs in journeying from Paris to Moisselles! A clerk who expects to become a notary does not expose himself to the risk of being arrested as a refugee——"

"Monseigneur, I may be capable of amusing myself by mystifying bourgeois on a journey, and I admit that I was wrong; but I did not leave my papers at the mercy of——"

"You are only adding to your fault by contradicting me. Search for the deed of transfer."

The clerk turned over the papers in his portfolio, but, of course, in vain.

"There, you need not derange them any more; here is what you are looking for," said the count, drawing the deed from his pocket. "If I had not taken it out, Père Leger would probably have been less scrupulous. However, let us forget all that, and step this way to dinner."

\* \* \* \* \*

When Moreau left the count, he walked with a slow step towards his house, frequently stopping to think over the past. Oscar, at the sight of his protector's face, crept into a corner out of the way. Presently Madame Moreau came in, not a little fatigued with what she had done; and on seeing her husband sitting on the sofa, exclaimed—

"Why, what is the matter with you?"

"My dear, we are lost. I am no longer the agent here; I have lost the count's confidence."

"How is that?"

"Père Leger, who was in the same conveyance with

the count, chattered about the Moulineaux affair; but it was not that which has for ever lost me his protection . . ."

"Eh! what?"

"Oscar spoke improperly of the countess, and revealed the count's secret maladies . . ."

"Oscar!" exclaimed Madame Moreau. "Then you are punished, my dear, where you sinned. You have nourished a serpent in your bosom. How many times have I told you . . ."

"That is enough," said Moreau, in an altered voice.

At this moment they both caught sight of Oscar in a corner. Moreau sprang up, caught him by the collar like a hawk darting upon his prey, and dragged him to the window.

"Speak!" he exclaimed, with frightful violence; "what did you say to monseigneur in the carriage? What demon set your tongue wagging there, while you stand like a dolt every time I speak to you? What was your meaning?"

Too stupified to answer, Oscar remained dumb and immovable.

"Come and ask pardon of his lordship," said Moreau.

"Does his excellency trouble himself about such vermin?" cried madame, furiously.

"Come with me to the château!" repeated Moreau.

Oscar fell to the floor in an inert mass.

"No! no! Mercy!" cried Oscar, who would not consent to a punishment worse than death to him.

Moreau seized him by the collar, dragged him along the courts, regardless of his prayers and entreaties, and into the presence of the count, and throw him at his feet.

"There, wretch! ask pardon on your knees of him who gave you your 'mind's bread,' by putting you in the public school."

Oscar lay on the floor, his face on the ground, foaming with rage, without speaking a word. The spectators trembled.

"This young man is nothing but vanity," said the count, after waiting in vain for his excuses. "A proud man would humiliate himself, for there is a greatness in certain abasements. I am greatly afraid that you will never be able to make anything of him, Monsieur Moreau."

The count turned away, and Moreau took Oscar back to his house. He then wrote a letter to Madame Clapart, informing her of all that had happened, and expressing his fears that Oscar was either an idiot or would become one.

On this particular evening the poor woman was sitting with her husband, and had been talking of Oscar, and endeavouring to prove to her husband that the contemptuous opinion he had of her son's faculties arose from prejudice; and that if ever they attained to a better position in the world, it would be owing to his success in life.

"Long before that happens," said her husband, with a prophetic air, "our bones will be converted into gelatine. You are completely blind to his faults. He is a boaster, a liar, idle and incapable. He never gained a single prize at school. *He* become the agent at Presles! Why, to become that he must understand surveying, agriculture . . ."

"He will learn."

"He?—rat! I would lay anything that, if he got the place, he would not have held it a week before he would have made some blunder which would cause the Count de Serisy to send him about his business."

"Good heavens! how can you speak in such bitter language of a poor boy full of good qualities, of angelic sweetness, and incapable of hurting a fly?"

At this moment the cracking of a postilion's whip and the prancing of a couple of horses were heard at the entrance of the courtyard, and the whole street was in commotion at the unwonted sight.

"Good God! what can be the matter?" exclaimed the poor mother, trembling like a leaf.

Brochon, the man to whom Moreau had confided Oscar, entered the room, followed by that silly youth and the postilion.

"What has happened to him?" asked the poor mother.

"I don't know, but M. Moreau is no longer the agent at Presles, and they say it is through your son. However, here is poor M. Moreau's letter, who is changed, madame, in such a manner that it makes one shudder to look at him."

"Clapart, offer a glass of wine to monsieur, and another to the postilion." They took the wine and departed.

As soon as they had gone Madame Clapart read the fatal letter, and when she had finished it she said, "Oscar, you desire to kill your poor mother. After all that I said to you this morning." She could say no more, but dragged herself to her bed and fainted.

When she recovered her senses, she saw Oscar still standing in the same place, and her husband shaking him by the arm, and saying—

"Will you answer?"

"Go to bed, sir," said she to her son, "and leave him in quietness, Monsieur Clapart; don't frighten him quite out of his senses, his face is changed enough to alarm one as it is."

In spite of all he had been through Oscar slept soundly, and was quite surprised that he who the previous evening thought himself unfit to live, should have a strong appetite for breakfast when he got up.

His poor mother's appearance when he entered the room where she was sitting would have inspired pity in the hardest heart. She made a sign to her son to sit down beside her; and then in a gentle voice she recalled all the benefits they had received from the count and his agent, and showed him how completely he had destroyed all hope of future assistance in his career from that quarter; that he had closed the public offices against him, because there was no chance

of his making his way there without influence, and there was nobody who knew anything of them beside the Count de Serisy ; that his conduct on the previous day had proved that he had not the discretion necessary for commerce, nor the capital requisite. There only remained, therefore, the liberal professions and the army. For the former a considerable sum would be required for fees, which she had not got ; the only thing open to him was to become a soldier.

Oscar was perfectly ignorant of life, and all that his mother had said made but little impression upon him until she came to the conclusion that he must enrol himself as a soldier, and then tears began to roll down his cheeks, at the sight of which she was unable to continue any longer ; and, like all mothers in similar cases, she wound up with the peroration which usually terminates these outbursts, in which they bear all their own pain as well as that of their children.

"Come, come, Oscar, *promise me* to be discreet in future, to mind what you say, to stifle your foolish self-conceit, to" &c. &c. &c.

Oscar promised everything, and the scene terminated by his mother embracing him, to console him for having been scolded.

"Now, you will follow your mother's advice, since a mother can give none that is not for her child's good. There is one other chance for you ; I will go to your uncle Cardot, who has always seen you once a quarter, and endeavour to interest him in your favour."

The visit to Cardot was made, and he undertook to pay all the fees that would be required to enable him to pursue his studies to qualify him for the practice of the law ; and to assist him still further if he proved by his probity, industry, and discretion, that he was worthy of it.

One morning Madame Clapart, her husband, and Oscar were sitting at breakfast over a herring salad, when M. Moreau entered.

"We are established in Paris," said he ; "my wife



resides here in a very unpretending style, and I am nearly always travelling about, for Leger, Margueron, and I have started in partnership, and the management is left entirely to me. Perhaps if we are satisfied with Oscar, we may be able to give him a very good post."

"Well, perhaps after all, my friend, the catastrophe due to Oscar's giddiness may be the cause of your making a fine fortune, for really your abilities and energy were lost at Presles."

And then Madame Clapart recounted the result of her visit to M. Cardot, and repeated the advice which that respectable relative had given respecting the management of Oscar.

"The good old man is right," said M. Moreau, "Oscar must be kept in the right road with an arm of iron. Ah! I have your affair. Our custom will be of importance to a lawyer, and I have been spoken to respecting one who has just commenced business. He is a young man of untiring activity and perseverance, named Desroches. I will go to him at once and offer him our business, on condition that he takes Oscar into his house for nine hundred francs. I will pay three hundred myself, so you will only have six hundred francs to pay. If the boy is ever to grow into a man worth anything, it will be in that office."

"Why don't you thank kind Monsieur Moreau, Oscar? you stand there like a fixture."

"The best way of thanking me and of making your peace with me for the past," said Moreau, pressing Oscar's hand, "is to apply yourself steadily to work, and to conduct yourself well."

Ten days later Oscar was presented by the ex-agent to Maître Desroches, a man six-and-twenty years of age, who was born of poor parents, and had been brought up by a very stern father. The sombre energy of his countenance, his closely cut hair, and the sharp brevity of his language terrified Oscar.

"Here we work day and night," said the young

lawyer. "We will not kill him, Monsieur Moreau, but he must keep step with us. Monsieur Godeschal," he called out, "here is the youth I spoke to you about, in whom Monsieur Moreau takes the liveliest interest; he will dine with us, and occupy the garret beside yours; you will allot him the time necessary to go from here to the School of Jurisprudence, and to return, so that he may not have five minutes to spare. You will watch him to see that he works hard at his studies; in short, he will be under your immediate direction, and I shall have an eye upon him occasionally. Make of him what you have made yourself—an able managing clerk—by the day when he passes his examination for the bar. Go with Godeschal, my young friend, he will show you your den. . . . You see Godeschal," said he to Moreau; "well, he is the brother of the famous dancer, Mariette, and, like me, he began life with only his ten fingers. I took him from Derville's office, where he had just been made second clerk, but I knew what was in him. I like the young fellow, too, very much. When he had a salary of only six hundred francs a-year, he managed to exist upon it without getting into debt, just as I did when I was a clerk. What I insist upon above all other things is, spotless probity; and when one practises this in indigence, he is a man."

"Oscar is in a good school," said Moreau.

For two whole years Oscar lived in this house, and was kept so strictly to his work and his studies that, though living in the midst of Paris, his life resembled that of a monk.

At five o'clock in the morning, winter and summer, he was called up by Godeschal. They both went down to the office as soon as they were dressed, and always found their chief at work when they entered. Oscar prepared his lessons for the school, but he prepared them of enormous proportions. Godeschal, and sometimes M. Desroches, pointed out to their pupil the authors to be examined, and the difficulties to be over-

come. Oscar never quitted any branch of the code without first satisfying his patron and Godeschal, by an examination longer and more complete than any to which he was likely to be subjected by the School of Jurisprudence, that he had thoroughly mastered the subject. On his return from the school, where he remained but a short time, he was at the disposal of the terrible Godeschal, who kept him hard at work on the business of the office until dinner was announced. After dinner they both returned to the office, and worked away until bedtime. Once a month Oscar breakfasted with his uncle Cardot, and his Sundays were spent with his mother. From time to time, when Moreau came to the office on business, he took him to the Palais Royal to dinner, and afterwards to some theatre. His incipient taste for dress and show had been so well kept under by Desroches and Godeschal, that he had ceased to think about it. Godeschal supported his precepts by example. The strict principles of honour, probity, and discretion which he inculcated on Oscar, he practised himself naturally, and without ostentation, just as he walked or breathed. Eighteen months after Oscar's installation, the second clerk committed some trifling error in his accounts for the second time; whereupon, Godeschal said to him in the presence of all the other clerks:—

“My dear Gaudet, quit the office of your own accord, that it may not be said that the patron dismissed you. Either your mind is not in your work, or you are not careful, and a man with those faults is of no use here. I will say nothing to the patron about your motive for leaving, that is all I can do for a comrade.”

At twenty years of age Oscar was boarded and lodged free of charge, and before he had completed his second year's study knew more of his profession than many men who had passed their examination. He attended the law courts, and did the business entrusted

to him with intelligence and to the satisfaction of Godeschal and Desroches. Still a slight propensity for show and pleasure was occasionally visible, though restrained by severe discipline and continuous labour. Moreau, finding how well he was going on, relaxed the severity of his manner towards him, and on the occasion of his passing one of his examinations with great success, thought he might make him a present to enable him to procure an elegant costume without danger of awakening his vanity. His mother, proud of and happy in her son, stinted herself of comforts and worked hard in preparing the trousseau of the future licentiate. After the vacation he was appointed second clerk, and in addition to the table and lodging, received a salary of eight hundred francs a-year. Also Cardot, who made secret inquiries respecting him of Desroches from time to time, was so satisfied with his conduct, that he told Madame Clapart that, if he continued to go on as well as at present, he would endeavour to negotiate the purchase of a business for him.

Notwithstanding these satisfactory appearances, Oscar Husson had severe mental struggles. At times he wished to quit a life so directly opposed to his tastes and character, and thought that galley-slaves were happier than he. The sight of well-dressed men of his own age, as he walked along the streets, filled him with envy, and life appeared a burden to him. Upheld by the example and watchfulness of Godeschal, he was dragged, rather than walked of his own accord, along the difficult and laborious path in which he had entered. Godeschal's principle was to keep Oscar as much as possible from temptation, for he had not failed to observe his weakness. Occasionally during the past year he had taken him out with him to parties of pleasure with the view of easing his chain a little, the expenses of which he defrayed probably with money placed at his command by Moreau. On one occasion, when the latter inquired of Godeschal how Oscar was going on, the latter replied—

"Always too much vanity, You give him fine clothes, and he goes to the Tuileries on Sundays to show off and seek for adventures. What can we expect, though? he is but young. I am afraid he is not cut out for a lawyer. He speaks pretty well, however, and may make a good advocate if his case is well prepared for him."

Shortly after Oscar had been promoted to the post of second clerk, a young man was taken into the office named Frederic Marest, who was intended for the magistracy, and had a conscientious desire to learn the details necessary to enable him to perform the duties of the post in a satisfactory manner. He had an income which he had inherited from a deceased uncle, but his great ambition was to occupy the post we have mentioned by the time he was thirty years of age.

The advent of this somewhat rich individual induced the other clerks to propose that he should pay his entrance fee; that is to say, that he should give a dinner. The manner in which this was suggested to him was, by placing a book containing a sham account of what had been the practice in the office from the earliest times down to the days of those then in it, across his pad of blotting-paper. He opened it, read a portion of the contents, and then laid it down without saying anything at the time; but when he was going away in the evening, he said—

"Gentlemen, I have a cousin who is the managing clerk in a notary's office, and I will consult him as to what I ought to do in respect to the matter referred to in that book."

"The future magistrate has not the air of a novice," remarked Godeschal.

The next day the managing clerk presented himself in Desroches' office, and the moment Oscar caught sight of him, he remembered him as the person who had so much excited his envy on the celebrated trip to Presles, and he exclaimed, in a free and easy tone—

"Eh! here is Ali Pacha's friend,"

"Hallo!—you here, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur?" returned George, recollecting Oscar.

"You know each other, do you?" said Godeschal.

"I believe you," replied George; "we did some silly things together some two years ago, when I was with Crottat, whom I left in consequence of that very affair."

"What affair?" asked Godeschal.

"Oh, nothing," answered George, at a sign from Oscar. "We tried to mystify a Peer of France, and we got the worst of it. . . . So you wish to 'do' my cousin?"

"We don't *do* anybody," replied Oscar, with dignity; "here is our charter."

George took it, and after looking at it for a moment, he said—

"Just what I thought; but as my cousin and I are rich enough, we will give you a capital dinner at the *Rocher de Cancale* on Sunday, at two o'clock; after which I will take you to pass the evening at the house of the Marchioness de Las Florentinas, of Cabirolas."

"*Hurrah!*" cried the clerks with one voice;—"bravo! *Vivent les Marets!*"

"Now then, what is the matter?" asked M. Desroches, coming out of his room. "Ah! you there, George; I understand you are come to debauch my clerks."

Calling Oscar, he re-entered his room. The purpose for which he wanted Oscar was to send him to the Palais de Justice to do some business which required a certain amount of intelligence as well as knowledge, and he handed him a note for five hundred francs to pay the fees, with especial directions not to suffer himself to be deceived by the opposing client's man of business; and if any difficulty arose which he could not overcome, he was to come back at once and let him, Desroches, know.

As this was the first important affair that had been entrusted to him since his elevation, Oscar departed with the full intention of distinguishing himself,

After Oscar and George had left the office, Godeschal inquired of Frederic Marest if the marchioness was not apocryphal ; but the latter assured him, with the utmost gravity, that the marchioness really existed, and was greatly attached to his cousin, who was about to retire from the law, seeing that his uncle had left him so much property that, with what he derived from the property left by his mother, he had an income of thirty thousand francs a year.

"How lucky," said Oscar to Godeschal on Sunday morning, "that I ordered a new suit of clothes the other day, and that my dear mother made me a present of those beautiful shirts on the day I passed my examination. . . . We shall make a figure there! Ah! if one of us should gain the affections of the marchioness. . . ."

"A pretty occupation for a clerk in Maître Desroches' office!" answered Godeschal. "You will never conquer that vanity of yours, then?"

"Ah! monsieur," said Madame Clapart, who at that moment entered the room with her son's cravats, "may God enable Oscar to follow your good advice. I constantly say to him, 'Imitate Monsieur Godeschal—listen to his advice!'"

"He will get on, madame," replied the chief clerk ; "but he must not make any more blunders like he made yesterday. He made a terrible mess of some business the patron gave him to do, and with my utmost exertions I was only just able to repair it."

"Ah! Godeschal," cried Oscar, pressing his hand, "you are a real friend."

"Ah! sir," said Madame Clapart, "a mother is happy who knows that her son has a friend like you, and you may rely on my gratitude as long as I live. Oscar, beware of that George Marest; he has already been the cause of your first misfortune in life."

"As how?" asked Godeschal.

The mother related succinctly the affair which took place in Pierrotin's coach.

"I am sure," said Godeschal, "that he has arranged some humbug or other for this evening, and, therefore, I shall not go to his marchioness, but shall leave you after the dessert. And mind you keep yourself on your guard, Oscar. It is not unlikely that you may be asked to play; if so, here are a hundred francs, for it must not be said that a second clerk in Maître Desroches' office has got no money, and your tailor's bill has emptied your purse, I know. But don't drink much, nor lose more than the hundred francs. Especially be careful to be in by midnight, because you must be at the Palace to-morrow morning at seven o'clock to get your judgment. There is no harm in amusing yourself, but business before everything."

"Do you notice well what Monsieur Godeschal says, Oscar? See how he can reconcile business with pleasure."

Oscar left the room for a moment to speak to some people who had called, and while he was gone his mother took the opportunity of returning Godeschal the hundred francs he had given her son. "May the blessings of a mother follow you everywhere, and in all your undertakings," said she to him.

The mother had thus the happiness of seeing her son well dressed; she had brought with her a gold watch, which she had purchased with her savings, and this she gave her son as a recompence for his good conduct.

"You will have to draw for the conscription in eight days," said she to him, "and as it is necessary to admit the possibility of your drawing a bad number, I have been to see your uncle Cardot. Pleased with your conduct, and the satisfactory manner in which you passed your examination at the School of Jurisprudence, he has promised to give the money for a substitute if you require one. Does it not make you happy to see how good behaviour meets with its reward? Think what pleasure you give your mother."

She contemplated his appearance for a moment, and felt the happiness which only a mother can know on



seeing how greatly he had improved and how manly an expression he had acquired from hard and constant study, and then she added—

“Amuse yourself, but remember Monsieur Godeschal’s advice. Ah! I had almost forgotten; here is our friend Moreau’s present, a handsome little portfolio.”

“It is all the more useful that I happen to have five hundred francs in my pocket which the patron gave me to pay the fees in the judgment which I have to get to-morrow morning, and I don’t wish to leave such a sum in my room.”

“You are carrying that money about with you!” exclaimed his mother in alarm. “Had you not better give it to M. Godeschal to keep for you?”

“Godeschal!” called out Oscar, who thought his mother’s idea an excellent one, but he had gone out.

Besides the clerks from Desroches’ office there were several literary men of note present at the dinner, who had relations with the ladies it was intended to visit in the course of the evening. Except one or two of these who were habituated to debauchery, the whole of the guests became “as drunk as Pitt and Dundas,” and George was forced to send for some carriages, and have them driven up and down the Boulevards until they had recovered themselves a little, before he could take them to the house where he had promised to introduce them.

Godeschal, who had quitted them shortly after dessert was placed on the table, as he had said he would, was right in supposing that the marchioness existed only in George’s imagination. Florentine was in reality only a dancer at one of the theatres, who by means of her salary, and money acquired by disreputable conduct, was enabled to occupy such splendid apartments that they appeared to Oscar and his fellow-clerks grand enough for a queen. Without any other motive than to amuse herself and her female friends, who were, for the most part, actresses and dancers, she adopted the hint given by George, and took upon herself the

character of a marchioness, and conferred upon her friends equally exalted titles. At the moment when George and his friends entered the drawing-room there were several of these ladies, with an equal number of gentlemen, seated round four card-tables, on which gold glittered in profusion. After Oscar had had sufficient time to admire the magnificence of the apartment, and the dresses and beauty of the women, Florentine took his hand and led him to one of the play-tables, where she introduced him to Fanny Beaupré, the actress, to whom she had given the title of Marchioness d'Anglarte, from the character she sustained in a piece which had an ephemeral success. Fanny received him with a fascinating smile, and invited him to share her fortune in the game they were playing. "Stake the money," said she; "you will bring me luck. I will play."

The sham marchioness drew out a purse ornamented with diamonds, and took from it five pieces of gold. "There," said she, "is my last hundred francs."

Oscar drew out a like sum and laid it on the table, not without a feeling of shame at placing his great silver five-franc pieces on a table where all the rest was gold. In a very few minutes all this was swept away.

"How stupid!" said Fanny. "I am going to be banker now. We continue our partnership, do we not?" she asked Oscar.

The young clerk seeing himself the object of the attention of all those seated at the table, had not the courage to confess that his purse was empty, and remained speechless, his tongue glued to the roof of his mouth.

"Lend me five hundred francs," called out the actress to Florentine.

Florentine took the sum from a heap which George had won at *écarté*, and handed it to her.

Oscar, with the weakness inherent in his character, took out his purse and drew from it the note for five hundred francs, which Desroches had given him to

pay the fees in the case of *Vandenesse v. Vandenesse*, and laid it on the table before Fanny.

"*Allons, mon petit*, lay hold of it!" cried Fanny Beaupré to Oscar, making a sign to him to take up the two hundred francs which their opponents had staked.

The actress was not chary of her jibes and pleasantries on those who lost; and some of her exclamations surprised Oscar considerably; but his joy was such, that he did not reflect on them, for they had won two thousand francs. He had a strong desire to take up his share, and leave his partner to play without him; but *honour* kept him fixed in his place. A few more deals, and every farthing of this had disappeared. Oscar was most completely sobered by his loss. He rose, and going to a sideboard, he drank several glasses of iced punch in succession. Then he wandered into another room, and sat down in an obscure corner; and the thought of how Desroches would regard him when he told him of what he had done, frightened him to such a degree, that he pulled out his handkerchief and buried his face in it and shed tears. There was such an expression of grief in his attitude, that Florentine, seeing him, went to him, and drew the handkerchief away from his eyes, and saw that he was weeping.

"What is the matter with you, *mon petit*?" asked she.

Oscar was so affected by the kindness of the tone in which she spoke, that he replied—

"I have lost five hundred francs entrusted to me to pay away to-morrow morning; I am dishonoured, and have no resource but to throw myself in the water. . . ."

"Nonsense!" said Florentine; "stay here a moment."

She returned almost immediately with a thousand francs, which she gave Oscar, telling him to put away half of it to replace that which he had lost, which did not belong to him, and to play only with the remaining five hundred. Instead of taking her advice with her money, he took only the latter, which he lost in backing

George at écarté. Hardly knowing what he was about, he insisted on taking the cards himself, and by one of those chances familiar to those who have observed men gamble for the first time, he won a considerable sum, and might perhaps have risen a winner had it not been for George, who would insist on interfering with advice which the other was too ignorant and too weak to resist; and the ultimate result was, that he rose from the table with only one hundred francs in his pocket. Stupified by his position, and the punch he had drunk so freely in the course of the night, he staggered into a bedroom, and threw himself on a sofa, and fell into a death-like sleep. Here he was seen lying by Mariette, Godeschal's sister, who had come in at the conclusion of the opera. On finding who he was, and that he had lost money which did not belong to him, with the thoughtful kindness of a woman, she put a note for five hundred francs in a letter to her brother, telling him of the condition in which Oscar was, and directed her servant to deliver it at M. Desroches' before seven o'clock. The servant obeyed orders punctually; but, instead of seeing Godeschal she saw Desroches himself, and on his asking her if it were on business, she replied in the affirmative, and he therefore opened it and read it. The reason of Godeschal's absence from the office at this hour of the morning was, that finding when he woke that Oscar had not been home, he at once divined the reason, and taking five hundred francs from his savings, he hastened to the official of the law court, did the business which ought to have been done by Oscar, and about eight o'clock presented himself to M. Desroches with the papers requiring his signature.

"Was it Oscar Husson who went to Simon's this morning?"

"Yes," replied Godeschal.

"Who gave him the money, then?"

"You, on Saturday."

"It rains five hundred franc notes, then. Hold, Godeschal; you are a good fellow, but young Husson

does not merit so much generosity. I hate imbeciles, but I hate still more those who commit faults in spite of all the care that is taken of them." Then, handing Mariette's letter with the bank-note to Godeschal, he continued: "You will excuse my having opened it; the maid told me it was on office business. You will send Oscar away."

A few minutes afterwards Moreau entered the notary's study, and received a by no means favourable account of Oscar's proceedings from Desroches.

"Make an advocate of him; in that profession his defects may perhaps be of service to him, for it is vanity which gives the power of speaking to half of them."

Let us return now to Oscar, whom we left soundly asleep on the sofa. It was about noon when he was awoke by the sound of voices and hearing his uncle Cardot's name pronounced. After listening a moment, he found that it was Cardot himself who was talking to Florentine. It is not necessary to repeat their conversation; suffice it to say, that it was interrupted by the uncle seeing his nephew lying on a sofa. The explanation which ensued resulted in Cardot giving him a five hundred franc note to replace that he had lost, and another for twice that amount to Florentine, to repay her that which she had lent Oscar, and in his respectable uncle giving him the assurance that he would never receive another penny from him as long as he lived. Even this concession on Cardot's part was only obtained by the tears and entreaties of Oscar, which were enough to melt a heart of stone, joined to the probably more influential request of Florentine. When Oscar found himself in the street he was like one demented, and knew not which way to turn. Meanwhile Moreau, having finished his business with Desroches, had gone straight from his office to the Rue de la Cerisaie, to prepare Madame Clapart for the new blow which had fallen upon her through her son. Soften the tale as he would, Moreau could not conceal from the poor mother that her son had gambled with and lost the office money.

"But what can we do with him now?" said the poor weeping woman.

"If he bore my name," answered Moreau, "I should see him draw for the conscription without uneasiness; and if he drew a bad number, I would take care not to find him a substitute. This is the second time your son has been led into the commission of follies from a foolish vanity. Well, that vanity may lead him when a soldier to perform some striking action which may advance him. Besides, after six years' service, he will be less flighty, and he will only have one examination to pass after he has served his time to enable him to practise as an advocate, and as he will then be only twenty-six years of age, he will not be too old to commence that career after 'having paid the impost of blood,' as they say."

"Cannot he go into another office?" asked Madame Clapart; "his uncle Cardot will certainly pay for a substitute for him."

At this moment they heard a cab pull up at the door, and directly afterwards Oscar showed himself in the room. He embraced his mother and held out his hand to Moreau, who refused to take it.

Oscar tried to find excuses for his conduct, and seemed to think it a small offence he had been guilty of, now that it was arranged, and promised faithfully that, if M. Moreau would assist him again, he would never more be guilty of the slightest indiscretion.

"Halt there," interrupted Moreau; "I have three children, and cannot bind myself to anything."

"Never mind, my son," said Madame Clapart; "your uncle Cardot——"

"There is no longer an uncle Cardot," replied Oscar; and he related the events which we have already described.

"All the misfortunes together!" murmured his mother, sinking to the ground.

Moreau lifted her up, and carried her to her room, and laid her on the bed; then returning to Oscar, who

appeared overwhelmed by his mother's grief, he said, "Your only course is to become a soldier. Clapart does not appear to me likely to live much longer, and your mother will be left without a penny in the world. Ought I not, therefore, to reserve every shilling I can spare for her?"

"I may draw a good number," said Oscar.

"After? Your mother has amply fulfilled her duties towards you; in return, you have departed from the path of honour. What can you attempt? You cannot be anything without money, as you know now; and you are not the man to doff the coat and assume the blouse of the workman. Besides, your mother loves you so dearly that she would die if she saw you fallen so low."

Oscar sat down, and the tears poured down his cheeks as he listened to this reasoning. He understood it now, although it was incomprehensible to him at the time he committed his first fault.

"People who have no fortune ought to be perfect," said Moreau.

"My destiny will soon be decided," said Oscar; "I draw the day after to-morrow. Before that time I shall have decided on something."

Moreau, deeply grieved, notwithstanding his seeming severity, left the family in despair. Three days afterwards Oscar drew the number twenty-seven. In Oscar's behalf Moreau had the courage to go to the Count de Serisy, and request him to use his influence to get Oscar placed in the cavalry. This was done, and the young man found himself in the same fine regiment with Count de Serisy's son, who had been given a commission as sous-lieutenant on leaving the Polytechnic School, and was further comforted with the promise that he should be promoted at the end of the year.

Oscar's conduct was so perfect, that after serving five years, he had attained the rank of chief-quarter-master in Viscount de Serisy's company, which, as the

regiment was one of the royal guard, gave him the rank of sous-lieutenant in the line ; and all his desire at this time was to get promoted to one of the line regiments in that capacity, for he saw perfectly well that there was no chance of his rising higher in his present regiment. At that time the commissions in the royal regiments were almost invariably given to the younger sons of noble families. As Oscar was generally quartered in Paris, or at no great distance from it, he had frequent opportunities of seeing his mother, to whom he often spoke of his desire to exchange into a line regiment. She spoke of her son's wishes to the Abbé Gaudron, who used his influence to effect Oscar's wishes, and succeeded in getting him the desired promotion.

This was in 1830 ; and, although to all outward seeming Oscar was devoted to the Bourbons, he was at heart a Liberal. Therefore at the Revolution he passed over to the people's side. This defection happened to draw public attention to him ; and, in the exultation caused by the triumph of August, he was made a lieutenant, and one of La Fayette's aides-de-camp, who procured him the grade of captain. When this amateur of the best of republics was deprived of the command of the National Guard, Oscar Husson, whose devotion to the new dynasty was almost fanatical, was sent as *chef d'escadron* to Africa. The Viscount de Serisy happened to be lieutenant-colonel of this regiment. At the affair at Musta, where the field remained in the possession of the Arabs, Serisy was wounded, and unable to move. The French were in the act of retiring when Oscar perceived the position of his commanding officer, upon which he called out, "Gentlemen, it is riding to death, but we cannot abandon our colonel." He turned his horse's head towards the Arabs, and charged them at the head of his squadron. The Arabs were so little prepared for this furious charge that the French rode right through them. Oscar raised the viscount, and laid him across his saddle, and then re-



treated, receiving in the *mêlée* two severe cuts from a yataghan in the left arm. The noble conduct of Oscar led to his having the officer's cross of the Legion of Honour conferred upon him, and to his promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel ; but his left arm had to be amputated.

We will now sum up briefly the remainder of the career of the man who twice wrecked his prospects at the beginning of his entry into life by the indulgence of a foolish vanity. The amputation of his arm led to his retirement from the army ; and, by the influence of the Count de Serisy, which was exercised on his behalf out of gratitude for the assistance he had rendered his son on the field of battle, he was appointed to a somewhat important post under Government, and thus enabled to offer his mother such a home for her old age as her sacrifices for him so well merited. Moreau was elected by the Department of the Oise to represent it in the Assembly, and distinguished himself as much in that position as he did in the management of his business. He became enormously rich, and on the occasion of his daughter marrying the Baron de Canalis, he gave her a marriage portion of two million francs. Pierrotin was so successful with his conveyance that he bought another, and then several others in succession, each more luxurious than the preceding, and ultimately realized a considerable fortune.

One day Oscar was walking along the Boulevard du Temple, when he saw standing at the entrance to one of the theatres a man whom he would not have recognised if he had not heard him speak, when he knew him to be George Marest. The ex-beau had grown corpulent, and his swollen, discoloured features told plainly enough of the debauched life he had led. His eyes had lost the brilliancy and vivacity of youth, which steady and regular habits have the power of preserving. The evidence of the state of misery to which he had fallen was to be read in his dress, which was one of pretension, combined with extreme seediness ;

badly-blacked boots, in the last stage of decay ; trousers of a cut which was the extreme of fashion once upon a time, but now worn and stained ; a waistcoat of a costly material, but apparently of equal antiquity with the continuations ; and—strongest proof of the hopelessly seedy individual—an old dress-coat, although it was then but mid-day ; and, finally, this expressive costume was crowned by a greasy old hat, stuck jauntily on an almost entirely bald head. Such was the condition to which vice had reduced the once brilliant George, who, when Oscar saw him at the party, possessed an income of thirty thousand francs a-year from the funds.

# The History of St. Galonnek.

A BRETON LEGEND. E. SOUVESTRE.

SAINT GALONNEK was a native of Hibernia, like most of those who then preached in Brittany, and called himself Galonnus, being, according to all appearance, of Roman origin ; but after his arrival in Damnonen, and when he had become celebrated by the good he had done, the Bretons, perceiving that his heart resembled those sources of living water which flow continually with a sweet murmuring sound, changed his name to Galonnek, which in their tongue means Greatheart.

And, in truth, never was there one of God's creatures that had a more open heart ; thus all the grievances of his brethren ruffled it like the surface of the sea beneath the wind, and none ever failed to receive his sympathy.

His father and mother were a good kind of people, although buried in the darkness of paganism, and they brought him up with all the care which parents give to a child who has cost them much disquietude. Galonnek received instruction from the wisest men in the island, chiefly from Saint Patrick, who was then among them, as a nightingale among sparrows, or a beech in the midst of shrubs. Under his care the child grew up in the knowledge and love of God, and his neighbour. The holy apostle of Hibernia inspired him with such a love for his fellow-creatures that, at the age of eighteen years, he decided to cross over to Armorica, to

announce the kingdom of heaven to those who wept. His father and mother, who had some time before this been converted to Christianity, offered no objection to this pious design ; they embraced him with many tears, and told him to depart where his vocation called him, and that they would one day meet before the throne of God.

Galonnek set sail in a boat, the boatmen in which determined to rob him ; but, when they found he had nothing about him but an iron cross and a staff made of holly, they threw him ashore on the coast of Cornouaille, without food or resources. On and on Galonnek journeyed, not knowing where he was, but happy and undisturbed, because he felt that he was in his Master's kingdom. The sea which murmured behind him, the birds which sang in the bushes, and the wind as it rustled among the leaves, each repeated in its way the name of that Master whose creatures and subjects they were. At last, towards evening, he arrived at a place situated between Audierne and Plougastel-des-Montagnes. There he perceived a village, and drawing near to the first house, he seated himself on the threshold, and waited for the people to invite him to enter. But, far from doing this, the master of the house shouted to him to get up and be off. Galonnek rose and passed on to the next house, where he seated himself in a similar way, and received a similar order ; and thus he passed from one house to the other, until he reached the last in the village. Now, as they had all told him to get up, the village has since that time borne the name of Plouzevel, or, *People who say, get up*. The saint was about to stretch himself on the ground beside the road, without any other bed than his courage, or any other pillow than his trust in God, when he perceived a hut, and approached it. It was inhabited by a poor widow, who had no earthly resources but a few barren fields, which she was almost too feeble to cultivate, but her heart was full of goodness and lovingkindness. Such was her love of her fellow-creatures that, if they

asked her for the milk of her goats, she gave them the cream, and if they asked her for the cream, she was willing to give them the goat itself. She received Galonnek as if he were a son whom she had long mourned as dead. She gave him the best of what she had, listened to his holy teachings; and, as she possessed the key itself of Christ's religion, which is charity, she speedily became a convert, and asked to be baptized, and Galonnek baptized her according to her desire; but, inasmuch as water was wanting for the performance of the ceremony, he took a hoe, and struck several blows on the ground, and straightway a fountain of water sprang up, and he said to the woman—

“With this water your barren fields will become fertile, and henceforward will feed as many cows as they once fed goats.”

This miracle began to open the eyes of the inhabitants of the village, who allowed Galonnek to establish himself in a forest which extended at that time from Plouzevel to the sea, where he built himself a hut of turf and boughs of trees. One day, while praying in his oratory, he heard the galloping of a horse, and having gone out to see who it was, he found the rider lying on the ground insensible. He raised him up, and carried him into his hut, where he dressed his wounds with leaves, and bound them up with strips torn from his robe. Now, this cavalier was no less a person than the Count de Cornouailles. His suite arrived some time after, guided by the traces left by the runaway horse, and found their master sleeping on the heap of rushes which served the saint for a bed, and the latter praying earnestly for his recovery. His prayers were heard; for when the count awoke his wounds were already cicatrized. They were greatly astonished at this miracle, but Galonnek said to them—

“Be not astonished; for if by faith one may remove mountains, by charity one may prevent death itself.”

The count was so overpowered with gratitude and

admiration, that he made a gift to Galonnek of the entire forest, and of as much arable land as he could encompass within the strips of the robe he had torn to bind up his wounds, even though each strip should contain only one thread. The saint thus became the possessor of an entire district, and it was from this circumstance that the saying arose, which is still current, that "It is by the extent of a benefit that the field of acknowledgment should be measured."

Nevertheless, the gift of the count did not make Galonnek any richer. All the revenue he derived from his estate was spent in solacing the miseries of the poor, while he himself continued to inhabit the hut he had built; only as the fame of his knowledge and sanctity spread abroad, great numbers of youths and young men came from the surrounding districts to receive instruction from him, and thus many other huts sprang up round that which he had built for himself, and a school was founded from which a knowledge of the Gospel spread through the surrounding country. It was in the forest, and by means of natural objects, that he instructed his pupils. Thus, he would point out to them a nest which a pair of little birds were building, and show them how a merciful Providence had given them this instinct; and how dependent everything animate and inanimate was upon each other—as the tree derived its support from the earth, which then gave a shelter to the birds, who enlivened the forest by their singing. In short, there was no object which did not furnish him with the text for a good moral lesson.

In those days the inhabitants of Brittany who dwelt on the coast were wreckers. They said of the sea, "It is a milch cow which God gave to our ancestors," and they regarded a shipwreck as a harvest.

One night, when Galonnek was returning from visiting a sick person, he was just entering the forest, when he caught sight of a number of the people who were leading and following a bull along the top of the

cliffs. The bull had a lantern tied to his horns, and his head was fastened by a cord to one of his forelegs, so that at every step his head rose and fell, and the lantern appeared to those at sea as if it were a light on board a vessel tossed about by the waves, and induced them to approach without fear and take this as a guide. Galonnek looked out to sea, and could distinguish the outline of the sails of a vessel which, deceived by the light, was rapidly approaching the breakers. He rushed forward and extinguished the lantern, and reproached them warmly for their cruelty and treachery; but they refused to hearken to him, and were seeking for the means of lighting the lantern again, when he cried—

“I adjure you by your hope of happiness in this world and the next not to do this thing, for those whom you are luring to destruction are your brethren and your children.”

And while they still doubted, God sent a great flash of lightning, and they were able to see that it was really a Breton vessel. Shocked at the narrow escape they had had, they threw themselves at his feet, and the women kissed the border of his robe with tears of gratitude as if he had rescued their children from a watery grave.

“But for him,” they said, “we should have become the murderers of our friends and our kinsmen.”

“Alas! those whom you have in times past caused to perish, were likewise your friends and kinsmen!” replied Galonnek, “since they were all descendants of Adam, and had been redeemed by the blood of the same Saviour.”

And the people were ashamed, and promised that they would not sin again in the same way.

Now the country was at one time greatly troubled by the presence of a dragon, which devoured flocks and herds and even men. Wherefore many of the inhabitants came to the saint, and entreated him to help them; and he was touched by their prayers, and

went to the prince, and got one of the knights who was with him, who had killed more than a thousand Saracens with his own hand, to go out and slay the dragon, the saint standing by and praying while he did so. Also, he delivered the country from other plagues, such as wolves, reptiles, and mosquitos; and age having by this time overtaken him, he added a chapel to his oratory, which he caused to be consecrated by St. Pol, where he daily offered up prayers. The number of huts went on increasing, and ended by forming a monastery, which Galonnek named "The House of Good Desires."

He was engaged in drawing up rules for its regulation, when the news was spread abroad that a fisherman of Crozon had ferried across a pale woman clothed in red, who had caused herself to be landed near Paullons, who, in reply to his inquiry as to who she was, said she was the Lady of Bad Air. It happened, in fact, that a few days later, men and animals were smitten with a sudden contagion, which carried them off in a few hours. The deaths were so numerous, that wood was wanting for coffins; and the gravediggers being unable to dig graves fast enough, the dead were buried in furrows made by the plough.

Those who were rich heaped up their valuables on waggons, and harnessing their horses to them, they fled to the mountain, where the white woman had not passed; but the poor who had but little could not resign themselves to losing that little, and so they remained in their cottages, waiting for death like sheep outside a slaughterhouse. Galonnek did not abandon them in their extremity. He went from hut to hut, bearing material help and spiritual consolation; and when the poor inhabitants died, he assisted in burying them with his own hands.

As the fame of his charity spread abroad, numerous presents were sent to him from all parts, but he disposed of them all for the benefit of the poor, himself remaining one of the poorest. Even the chalice which



he used in the administration of the sacrament was made of clay fashioned with his own hands.

The Christian religion had by this time become almost universally adopted, and a bishopric was established, which was offered to Galonnek, but in his humility he declined it; but Saint Pol came himself to urge him to accept it, and he could no longer refuse.

At the moment when he was about to quit the hut where he had dwelt so long he burst into tears, and he fell on his knees and prayed that he might be made worthy of the post he was called on to fill; after which he felt strengthened, and taking the earthen chalice he proceeded on foot to the capital.

Here he began a new life of courage and abnegation. In those days might took the place of right, and he was frequently subjected to great dangers in defending the poor against the rich, the weak against the strong, but he placed his trust in God and feared no man. Powerfully impressed by the example of his virtues, many men of note, who had till then remained in idolatry, came to him for instruction in the Christian religion, and were baptized, but he made it a condition with all of them, that they should do some great work for the benefit of their poor brethren, to prove that they really had become Christians in deed as well as in name.

About this time the old Count of Cornouaille died, and was succeeded by his son, Tugduval. He was a young man, puffed up with pride and vainglory, and who would never bear the slightest contradiction. Having committed acts of injustice towards many of his subjects, they formed a league and drove him from among them. But Tugduval fled to the King of Vaunes, and got an army from him, which his revolted subjects could not withstand; many of these latter were killed in battle, and the remainder took shelter in the capital, to which the count laid siege.

After a time the wall gave way to his battering-rams, and mounting his horse he ordered his soldiers

to take their sword in one hand and a torch in the other—for he had vowed not to spare one of the inhabitants—and to follow him into the town.

Now, Galonnek had heard of his oath, and while the count was preparing for the assault, he and the preachers under his control assembled in the cathedral, from whence they emerged bareheaded, and walked in procession to the breach, where they arrived just as the count was entering at the head of his army. The count was astonished at the sight, and reined in his horse.

The aged bishop walked straight up to him, and, standing beside his stirrup, he said gently—

“When one desires to devour the flock, he begins by destroying the shepherd; behold me at your mercy, and ready to purchase with my blood the pardon of the others.”

At the sight of the holy man, whom he had been taught to respect, and at the sound of that voice which always seemed as if it were uttering a blessing, Tug-duval's rage passed away; he sheathed his sword, and bending low he reverently kissed the chalice which Galonnek held in his hand. At the same instant all the soldiers beat their torches against the ground, and proclaimed quarter to all.

The count dismounted from his horse, and went with Galonnek to the cathedral, where vanquishers and vanquished united in prayer and thanksgiving to the Almighty.

This was the last memorable event in the life of Saint Galonnek. Soon after this he began to feel that his strength was leaving him, but he did not cease from his charitable labours. One day he was returning from a village where he had been to comfort a poor widow who had just lost the last of her sons, when he suddenly felt that the day of his deliverance had arrived. He sat down upon a stone by the wayside to rest. Soon afterwards, a merchant passing by drew near to him, and found that he was dead. Deceived

by the poor appearance of his dress, the merchant took him for a poor wanderer ; and stripping off his own mantle, he wrapped the body in it as in a shroud ; and a poor woman who lived in a cottage near at hand, gave him an old coffer to serve as a coffin ; and the Bishop Galonnek was deposited in the earth as if he had been a beggar.

After a little time the truth became known, by the number of miracles which were done at his grave, and the body was dug up and carried into the town with much pomp. and was laid in a tomb in the cathedral at the foot of the high altar. Saint Pol was asked to engrave an epitaph for him, but the great apostle replied that it would require an archangel to write on so worthy of him, wherefore they were content to the single word—Galonnek.

For ages afterwards Breton mothers came to place on their newborn infants on his tomb, and to offer up the following prayer :—

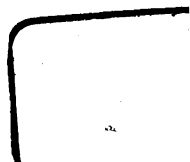
“Saint Galonnek, give my child two hearts ; the heart of a lion to do good, and the heart of a turtle-dove to love his neighbour.”

THE END.

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